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NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION.

PROCEEDINGS

IN CONNECTION WITH THE

TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE FEDERATION,

HELD IN MANCHESTER,

MAY 12th, 13th, and 14th, 1904,

WITH

The Annual Report and the Speeches,

INCLUDING THOSE DELIVERED BY

THE RIGHT. HON.

JOHN MORLEY, M.P.,

THE RIGHT. HON.

HERBERT J. GLADSTONE, M.P.

AND

MR. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P.

1904.

**THE LIBERAL PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT,
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
1.—Summary of the Proceedings	4
2.—Twenty-Fifth Annual Report	9
3.—First Session of the Council	53
Adoption of the Report and Presidential Address	54
Election of President and Treasurer	58
The Retirement of Sir William Harcourt	59
The Political Situation	60
Free Trade and Social Reforms	62
4.—Second Session of the Council	66
Education	66
National Expenditure	69
Temperance Reform	76
Chinese Labour	78
Vote of Thanks to Manchester Liberals	81
5.—Public Meeting in Free Trade Hall	83
Chairman's Address... ..	83
Speech by Mr. John Morley	84
Speech by Mr. Winston S. Churchill	98
The Government and the Country	102
Thanks to the Chairman	103
6.—Breakfast to Liberal Secretaries and Agents	104
Speech by Mr. Herbert Gladstone	104
7.—Other Meetings	108

NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION.

PRESIDENT :

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL, K.O.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE :

EDWARD EVANS, JUNR.

(President of the Liverpool Liberal Federal Council.)

TREASURER :

DR. JOHN MASSIE.

(Vice-President of the Oxford Liberal Association.)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE :

*(Elected at the Annual Meeting of the General Committee at Leeds,
February 26th, 1904.)*

ACLAND, FRANCIS DYKE (Richmond Division of Yorkshire).
ANN, E. T. (President of the Derby Liberal Association).
BARRAN, ALFRED (Vice-President of the North Leeds Liberal Association).
BIRD, ROBERT (Vice-President of the Cardiff Liberal Association).
BRUNNER, J. F. L. (Cheshire Liberal Federal Council).
BUNTING, P. W. (President of the South St. Pancras Liberal Association).
BURGESS, A. H. (Hon. Sec. of the Harborough Division [Leicestershire] Lib. Assn.).
DAVIES, W. HOWELL (President of the South Bristol Liberal Association).
DICKINSON, W. H. (Chairman of the London Liberal Federation).
FULLERTON, HUGH (Manchester).
ILLINGWORTH, PERCY HOLDEN (Shipley Division of Yorkshire).
LEHMANN, R. C. (South Bucks Liberal Association).
MACDONALD, J. A. MURRAY (President of the Bow and Bromley Liberal and Radical Association).
RADFORD, CHARLES H. (President of the Plymouth Liberal Association).
ROWNTREE, ARNOLD S. (Hon. Secretary of the York Liberal Association).
WATSON, DR. ROBERT SPENCE (Vice-President of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Liberal Association).
WELLS, SIR ARTHUR S., Bart. (Hon. Secretary of the Home Counties Liberal Federation). *Elected by Executive Committee, March 23rd under Rule V.*
WHIBLEY, HERBERT G. (President of the Cambridge Liberal Association).
WILLANS, J. E. (Vice-President of the Huddersfield Liberal Association).
WRIGHT, FRANK (President of the Birmingham Liberal Association).

SECRETARY :

ROBT. A. HUDSON.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY :

FRANK BARTER.

OFFICES :

42, PARLIAMENT STREET, LONDON, S.W.

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PROCEEDINGS
AT THE
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
OF THE
NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION
HELD AT THE
MIDLAND HALL, MANCHESTER,
THURSDAY and FRIDAY, MAY 12th and 13th, 1904.

FIRST SESSION.

THURSDAY, MAY 12TH. 2 P.M.

REPORT AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS.

Moved by Mr. BIRRELL (President of the Federation); seconded by Mr. ROBERT BIRD (Chairman of the Finance Committee of the National Liberal Federation); and resolved:—

“That the Report and Statement of Accounts be received and adopted.”

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND TREASURER.

Moved by Mr. C. E. SCHWANN, M.P. (President of the Manchester Liberal Federation); seconded by Mr. J. EMMOTT BARLOW, M.P. (Chairman of the Manchester Reform Club); and resolved:—

“That Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C., be re-elected President, and that Dr. John Massie, be re-elected Treasurer for the ensuing year.”

RETIREMENT OF SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT.

Moved by THE PRESIDENT; seconded by Mr. F. CAWLEY, M.P. (Lancashire—Prestwich Division); and resolved:—

“That this Council learns with deep regret of the impending withdrawal from the House of Commons of Sir William Harcourt. It places on record its grateful appreciation of the long and eminent services

which he has rendered to the country, and expresses its earnest hope that he may live long to give his powerful aid towards the accomplishment of many of those reforms which he has helped so much to promote and which the Liberal party stands resolutely pledged to carry into effect."

THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

Moved by Mr. HILAIRE BELLOC (Prospective Liberal Candidate for South Salford); seconded by Sir JOHN BRUNNER, BART., M.P. (Cheshire—Northwich); and resolved :—

"That this Council records its hearty and unabated confidence in Lord Spencer and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and their colleagues in the two Houses of Parliament, and, being satisfied by the clear evidence of the by-elections and other unmistakable signs that Mr. Balfour's present Administration, far from representing the opinion of the Country, has incurred the contempt of men of all shades of political opinion, calls upon the Government to submit itself to the judgment of the constituencies at the earliest possible moment."

FREE TRADE.

Moved by Sir W. H. HOLLAND, M.P. (Yorkshire—Rotherham Division); seconded by Mr. REGINALD MCKENNA, M.P. (North Monmouth); and resolved :—

"That this Council, whilst reiterating its former declarations upon the revolution in our Fiscal Policy proposed by Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain, recognises that the course of recent events has shown that the preservation of the Country from the evils of Protection and the Taxation of Food depends mainly upon the determined and organised opposition of the Liberal Party, and calls upon all who are alive to these dangers to join in saving the Country from them."

LAND AND SOCIAL REFORMS.

Moved by Mr. F. S. STEVENSON, M.P. (Suffolk—Eye Division); seconded by Mr. HENRY VIVIAN (Prospective Liberal Candidate for Birkenhead); and resolved :—

"That this Council again calls attention to the urgent necessity of Social Reform, particularly in connection with the Housing Question, the reform of the Land Laws, the Equality of Rating, and kindred matters, and once more records its opinion that Land Values should be taxed so as to contribute their fair share towards the ever-increasing cost of local administration."

SECOND SESSION.

FRIDAY, MAY 13TH. 10.30 A.M.

EDUCATION.

Moved by Dr. JOHN MASSIE (Treasurer of the National Liberal Federation); seconded by Mr. F. D. ACLAND (Prospective Liberal Candidate for the Richmond Division of Yorkshire); and resolved:—

“That this Council is convinced that no satisfactory settlement of the Education Question can be obtained from the present Government, and that no settlement can be accepted that does not secure for the country a national system of Education based on popular control and management, and freed from religious tests and sectarian influences.”

NATIONAL EXPENDITURE.

Moved by Mr. L. V. HARCOURT, M.P. (Lancashire—Rossendale Division); seconded by Mr. A. E. W. MASON (Prospective Liberal Candidate for Coventry); and resolved:—

“That this Council views with alarm the enormous growth of the ordinary yearly expenditure of the nation due to the long predominance of the Tory party, and declares such expenditure to be uncalled for by national necessities. In particular, the Council protests against the extravagance of the amounts now spent upon armaments, and against the loss of life and waste of money involved in needless and aggressive expeditions such as those in Somaliland and Tibet.”

TEMPERANCE REFORM.

Moved by Mr. T. P. WHITAKER, M.P. (Yorkshire—Spen Valley Division); seconded by Dr. A. P. THOMAS (Prospective Liberal Candidate for the Bootle Division of Lancashire); and resolved:—

“That this Council strongly condemns the Government Licensing Bill, since it interferes with the discretion of the Magistrates, does nothing to popularise the constitution of the Licensing Authority, and by creating for the first time a vested interest in a licence places new and serious obstacles in the way of Temperance Reform.”

CHINESE LABOUR.

Moved by Mr. CHARLES FENWICK, M.P. (Northumberland—Wansbeck Division); seconded by Mr. ELLIS J. GRIFFITH, M.P. (Anglesey); and resolved :—

“That this Council protests against the Ordinance permitting the introduction of indentured Chinese Labour into the Transvaal, and, whilst challenging the statement that cheap foreign Labour is a commercial necessity, places on record its conviction that the proposal is inconsistent with the Common Law of England, destructive of the love of liberty, inimical to the true interests of South Africa, and likely to weaken the bond of union between the several portions of the Empire.”

VOTE OF THANKS TO MANCHESTER LIBERALS.

Moved by Mr. EDWARD EVANS, JUNR. (Chairman of General Committee of National Liberal Federation), and resolved :—

“That the best thanks of this Council be tendered to the President of the Manchester Liberal Federation and his colleagues, and to the Officers and Members of the Reception Committee for their excellent arrangements in connection with the visit of the Federation to Manchester, also to Mr. Charles E. Schwann, M.P., and Mrs. Schwann, and to Mr. J. Emmott Barlow, M.P., President of the Reform Club, and the Committee of the Club for their generous hospitality.”

PUBLIC MEETING

HELD IN THE

FREE TRADE HALL, MANCHESTER,

FRIDAY EVENING, MAY 13th, 1904.

Mr. C. E. Schwann, M.P. (President of the Manchester
Liberal Federation), in the Chair.

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.

SPEECH BY

The Right Hon. JOHN MORLEY, M.P.

THANKS TO MR. MORLEY.

Moved by Mr. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P.; seconded by Mr. T. G. HORRIDGE, K.C. (Prospective Liberal Candidate for East Manchester); and resolved:—

“That this meeting accords its warmest thanks to the Right Hon. John Morley for his statesmanlike and eloquent speech, and recognises with admiration his high and consistent support of the great principles of Peace, Retrenchment and Reform.”

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COUNTRY.

Moved by Mr. AUGUSTINE BIRKELL, K.C. (President of the National Liberal Federation); seconded by Sir JOHN T. BRUNNER, Bart., M.P.; and resolved:—

“That this meeting cordially endorses the resolutions adopted by the Council of the National Liberal Federation at its meetings in Manchester, and pledges itself to help in securing the triumph of Liberal Principles by the return of the Liberal party to power whenever the country is next appealed to.”

THANKS TO THE CHAIRMAN.

Moved by THE RIGHT HON. JOHN MORLEY, M.P.; seconded by Mr. ARTHUR A. HAWORTH (Prospective Liberal Candidate for South Manchester); and resolved:—

“That this meeting expresses its best thanks to the President of the Manchester Liberal Federation for his conduct in the Chair.”

NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

INTRODUCTORY.

The outstanding feature of the past year has been the Protectionist propaganda begun by Mr. Chamberlain at Birmingham during the last Annual Meeting of the Federation at Scarborough. It is satisfactory to be able to record not only that the Liberal party remains solid for Free Trade but that Protection is resisted by a large and influential section of the Unionist party, now thoroughly disintegrated as the result of Mr. Chamberlain's new departure.

The outbreak of war between Russia and Japan in the Far East is to be deplored, and the international situation created by the war is one in which this country has now a direct treaty interest on account of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

The better understanding with France is heartily to be welcomed, and Lord Lansdowne must be warmly congratulated on the arrangement by which Great Britain and France have come to a settlement of their differences in various parts of the world, differences which on more than one occasion might have resulted in what would doubtless have been described as inevitable war.

That more progress has not been made with the reforms that were to ameliorate the lot of the subjects of the Sultan in the Near East is much to be regretted, and it becomes more and more doubtful whether fresh action must not be taken if anything effective is to be accomplished.

The Federation last met in Manchester in 1889 with Mr. Gladstone as the chief speaker on the occasion. In 1904, assembling once more in Manchester, the Committee welcomes to its meetings the author of the great biography of Mr. Gladstone, which has been given to the world during the past year. Liberals have drawn fresh inspiration from this survey of the life of the noblest leader the Liberal party has ever known.

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING.

The Twenty-fifth Annual Meeting of the Federation was held at Scarborough on May 14th and 15th, 1903.

FIRST SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

THURSDAY, MAY 14TH, 1903.

The First Session of the Council was held in the Londesborough Theatre on the afternoon of Thursday, May 14th, Mr. Augustine Birrell presiding.

The Mayor (Mr. William Morgan) attended at the opening of the proceedings, and in a cordial and appreciative speech welcomed the Federation to Scarborough.

The adoption of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts was moved by the President, seconded by Sir Charles McLaren, Bart., M.P. (Leicestershire—Bosworth Division), and carried unanimously.

It was resolved, on the motion of the President, seconded by Mr. J. E. Willans (Huddersfield), to amend Rule V. by inserting at the end of the first paragraph* the following words:—

“The Executive Committee shall have power to fill any casual vacancies occurring during the year.”

It was moved by Mr. J. Compton Rickett, M.P. (Scarborough), seconded by Mr. Harold J. Reckitt, M.P. (Lincolnshire—Brigg Division), and unanimously resolved:—

“That Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C., be re-elected President, and that Dr. John Massie be elected Treasurer for the ensuing year.”

It was moved by Dr. John Massie (Treasurer of the National Liberal Federation), seconded by Mr. W. H. Lever, supported by Sir John T. Brunner, Bart., M.P. (Cheshire—Northwich Division), and unanimously resolved:—

“That this Council warmly approves of the proposal to create a National Liberal Campaign Fund.

“The Council, believing that the issues to be determined at the next General Election are of supreme importance to the good government and future well-being of the country, pledges itself to do all

* Paragraph referred to, Rule V.—“Executive Committee—The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of the Federation, with not more than twenty other members (Members of Parliament being ineligible) to be elected by the General Committee at its first meeting in each year, in accordance with Rule IV.”

in its power to raise such a Fund as shall be adequate for the accomplishment of the great task which lies before the Liberal party."

It was moved by Mr. D. Lloyd-George, M.P. (Carnarvon), seconded by Sir George W. Kekewich, K.C.B., and unanimously resolved :—

"That this Council places on record its conviction that the Education Act, by reason of its violation of sound constitutional principles and also on account of the methods adopted in carrying it through Parliament, can be no settlement of the Education Question, and pledges itself to work for such alteration in the law as will secure for the country a national system of Education based on popular control and freed from religious tests and sectarian influences.

"Further, this Council protests against the shameless obstinacy of the Government in ignoring the censure unmistakably expressed by the country on the Education Act of 1902 by the introduction of an Education Bill for London which is not only marred by the same vices, but made grotesque and impossible by vices of its own."

It was moved by Dr. T. J. Macnamara, M.P. (Camberwell—North), seconded by Mr. Edward McHugh (President of the Society for the Taxation of Land Values), and unanimously resolved :—

"That in the opinion of this Council it is urgently necessary that the owners of land values should be placed under the obligation of directly contributing their fair share towards the ever-increasing cost of local administration."

SECOND SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

FRIDAY, MAY 15TH.

The Second Session of the Council was held in the Londesborough Theatre, on the morning of Friday, May 15th, Mr. Augustine Birrell (President of the Federation) in the chair.

It was moved by Mr. John E. Ellis, M.P. (Nottinghamshire—Rushcliffe Division) ; seconded by Mr. Luke White, M.P. (Yorkshire—Buckrose Division), and unanimously resolved :—

"That this Council views with alarm the enormous growth of the national expenditure, due to the long predominance of the Tory party and the reckless policy of the Government, an expenditure which is wholly out of proportion to the national needs, which lays upon the people an intolerable burden of taxation, which cripples the commerce and endangers the credit of the country, and has led to the abandonment of those great principles of Free Trade on which our national prosperity depends."

It was moved by Mr. Thomas Burt, M.P. (Morpeth) and seconded by Mr. R. C. Lehmann (South Bucks Liberal Association):—

“That in view of the social reforms which are imperatively needed to improve the condition of the people, it is essential that the House of Commons should contain a more effective representation of all classes, and to this end this Council is of opinion that the obstacles which hitherto have prevented members of the less wealthy and the labouring classes from being themselves elected to Parliament should be removed by measures securing, amongst other things, Manhood Suffrage, the abolition of plural voting, Payment of Returning Officers' Expenses, and Payment of Members of Parliament.”

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who had arrived on a visit to the Council Meeting, on the invitation of the President addressed the Delegates in support of the resolution and on the subject of Party Organisation.

Mrs. Swann (Bristol) and Miss Alison Garland (Plymouth) having spoken to the resolution, it was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

It was moved by Mr. Ellis J. Griffith, M.P. (Anglesey), seconded by Mr. Hamar Greenwood (Prospective Liberal Candidate for York), and unanimously resolved:—

“That in the opinion of this Council the powers of the House of Lords are inconsistent with the principles of democratic government and a menace to the safety of the State; it restricts the freedom of the Executive and the Representative Chamber by causing Measures to be prepared with direct reference to that which will satisfy the narrow views of an hereditary and irresponsible body; it rejects or mutilates Liberal Measures, whilst always assenting to and often intensifying the mischief of Tory legislation; and this Council considers it imperative that the earliest opportunity should be taken by a Liberal Administration to ensure that the will of the people, as expressed by the House of Commons, shall be final and conclusive.”

It was moved by Mr. Edward Evans (Chairman of Committee of the National Liberal Federation), and carried by acclamation:—

“That the best thanks of this Council be tendered to the President of the Scarborough Liberal Association and his colleagues, and to the Officers and Members of the Reception Committee, for their excellent arrangements in connection with the visit of the Federation to Scarborough; to Mr. J. Compton Rickett, M.P., and Mr. and Mrs. John E. Ellis for their generous hospitality; and to the Worshipful the Mayor of Scarborough for the welcome extended by him to the Federation on behalf of the Borough.”

Mr. W. S. Rowntree (Chairman of the Scarborough Liberal Association) briefly acknowledged the vote of thanks, and the proceedings then terminated.

On the same evening a great Public Meeting was held in the Circus, St. Thomas's Street. The capacious building was filled with a most representative gathering, including the majority of delegates who had attended the two Sessions of the Federation Council.

Mr. George Alderson-Smith, J.P., D.L. (President of the Scarborough Liberal Association), occupied the chair.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who received a most enthusiastic welcome, addressed the meeting, and the following resolution, which was moved by Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C. (President of the National Liberal Federation), seconded by Mr. J. Compton Rickett, M.P., and supported by Mr. John E. Ellis, M.P., was carried by acclamation :—

“That this meeting accords its warmest thanks to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman for his presence and speech to-night, assures him and his colleagues of the loyal confidence of the Liberal Party, cordially endorses the resolutions adopted by the Council of the National Liberal Federation at its meetings in Scarborough, and pledges itself to help in securing the triumph of Liberal principles by the return of the Liberal Party to power whenever the country is next appealed to.”

A hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman, moved by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, seconded by Mr. Luke White, M.P., and supported by Mr. W. S. Rowntree, brought the great meeting to a close.

In connection with the visit of the Federation to Scarborough a reception was given in the Grand Hotel on May 14th, by the President, Officers and Committee of the Scarborough Liberal Association, to the Members of Parliament, Delegates, and other representative Liberals attending the meetings. Mr. George Alderson-Smith (President of the Scarborough Liberal Association) extended a cordial welcome to the visitors to Scarborough, and short speeches were also delivered by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and others.

Previous to the reception, Mr. J. Compton Rickett, M.P., entertained at dinner, at the Grand Hotel, a large number of Members of Parliament, Liberal Candidates and other representative visitors, to

meet Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman ; and on Saturday, May 16th, Mr. and Mrs. John E. Ellis entertained the Delegates at a Garden Party, at their charming residence, Wrea Head, Scalby. The invitation was accepted by about nine hundred Delegates, for whom special trains were provided by Mr. Ellis. Before separating, the guests passed a hearty vote of thanks to their hosts.

THE GENERAL COMMITTEE.

(a)—Mr. Chamberlain's Fiscal Proposals.

(July 1st, 1903.)

A Special Emergency Meeting of the General Committee of the Federation "to consider Mr. Chamberlain's Fiscal Proposals" was held at Westminster on Wednesday, July 1st, 1903.

The Meeting was summoned by the Officers under the special powers given to them in cases of emergency, under Rule IV.

Mr. Edward Evans, Junr. (Chairman of Committee), presided over a large and representative gathering, delegates being in actual attendance from upwards of three hundred Parliamentary constituencies in England and Wales. The following Peers and Members of Parliament accepted the invitation of the Committee to attend the meeting :—The Earl Carrington, G.C.M.G., Lord Tweedmouth, Lord Brassey, Lord Leigh, Lord Reay, Lord Battersea, Lord Sandhurst, Lord Farrer, the Right Hon. H. H. Asquith, K.C., Mr. T. Gair Ashton, Mr. C. P. Allen, Mr. Sydney Buxton, Mr. Rowland H. Barran, Mr. Henry Broadhurst, Mr. Thomas Burt, Mr. T. R. Buchanan, Mr. W. Randal Cremer, Mr. R. K. Causton, Mr. R. Hunter Craig, Mr. F. A. Channing, Mr. Vaughan Davies, Mr. Charles Douglas, Mr. John E. Ellis, Mr. S. T. Evans, Mr. Frank Edwards, Mr. Alfred Emmott, Sir Walter Foster, the Right Hon. H. H. Fowler, M.P., Mr. J. M. F. Fuller, Sir W. Brampton Gurdon, Bart., Mr. Corrie Grant, Mr. A. C. Humphreys-Owen, Sir W. H. Holland, Mr. Charles E. Hobhouse, Sir Arthur D. Hayter, Bart., Mr. Alfred E. Hutton, Mr. Alfred Jacoby, Mr. Maurice Levy, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Bart., Mr. George Lambert, Mr. Thomas Lough, Sir Joseph Leigh, Sir John Leng, Sir Joseph F. Leese, Mr. J. W. Logan, Mr. George McCrae, the Right Hon. J. W.

Mellor, Mr. Reginald McKenna, Mr. H. R. Mansfield, Sir Frederick T. Mappin, Bart., Sir William Mather, Mr. Robert J. Price, Mr. R. W. Perks, Mr. J. M. Paulton, Mr. Oswald Partington, Mr. Walter Runciman, Mr. C. D. Rose, Mr. J. Compton Rickett, Mr. Russell Rea, Mr. J. Herbert Roberts, Dr. J. G. Shipman, Mr. Stuart M. Samuel, Mr. C. E. Shaw, Sir Edward Strachey, Bart., Mr. F. Whitley Thomson, Mr. George Toulmin, Mr. Theo. C. Taylor, Mr. James Tomkinson, Mr. John Wilson, Mr. George White, Mr. Henry J. Wilson, Mr. Joseph Walton, Mr. J. Lawson Walton, K.C., Mr. Luke White, Sir James Woodhouse, Mr. J. H. Whitley, Mr. Eugene Wason, and Mr. J. Cathcart Wason,

1st Resolution.—It was moved by the Right Hon. H. H. Asquith, K.C., M.P.,* seconded by Mr. J. Herbert Tritton (City of London), supported by Sir W. H. Holland, M.P. (Manchester), Mr. A. C. Osler (Birmingham), Sir John Leng, M.P. (Dundee), Mr. R. D. Holt (Liverpool), the Right Hon. Sir H. H. Fowler, M.P., Mr. Frank Edwards, M.P., (Radnorshire), Mr. John Albert Bright (Rochdale), and Mr. George Lambert, M.P. (Devon), and unanimously resolved :—

“That this General Committee of the National Liberal Federation views with alarm the proposed reversal of our fiscal policy announced by Mr. Chamberlain, and shortly to be promulgated by him throughout the country, and calls upon all who are interested in our commercial prosperity and the social condition of the people to resist by all means in their power proposals which, if adopted, will inevitably raise the price of food and raw materials, and, by increasing the cost of production, reduce trade, involve us in a war of tariffs, endanger our relations with our Colonies, and threaten the stability of the Empire.”

2nd Resolution.—It was moved by Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C. (President of the National Liberal Federation), seconded by the Earl Carrington, G.C.M.G. (Chairman of the Home Counties Liberal Federation, and President of the National Liberal Club), supported by Mr. W. S. Robson, K.C., M.P. (South Shields), and Dr. Robert Spence Watson (Newcastle-on-Tyne), and unanimously resolved :—

“That in view of the misunderstandings already existing in the Colonies as to the authority of Mr. Chamberlain’s speeches, and having regard to the dangerous consequences to trade and commerce of continued uncertainty and unrest, it is the duty of the Government to decide and make known at once what their fiscal policy is to be.”

* An authorised verbatim report of Mr. Asquith’s speech was issued as a pamphlet by the Liberal Publication Department.

(b)—The Political Situation.*(November 18th, 1903.)*

A Special Meeting of the General Committee (convened by Resolution of the Executive Committee) "to consider the present Political Situation, was held in Liverpool on the afternoon of Wednesday, November 18th, 1903.

The Chair was taken by Mr. Edward Evans, Junr. (Chairman of Committee).

The following Resolutions were unanimously passed.*

FISCAL POLICY.

1st Resolution.—Moved by the President of the National Liberal Federation (Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C.), seconded by Sir John Brunner, Bart., M.P. (Northwich Division of Cheshire), and supported by Mr. James Lawrence (Liberal Candidate, Chorley Division of Lancashire), Mr. B. S. Johnson (President of the Bootle Division and Kirkdale [Liverpool] Liberal Associations, and Chairman of the Liverpool Reform Club), and Mr. J. H. Whitley, M.P. (Halifax):—

"That this General Committee of the National Liberal Federation strongly condemns the reversal of our Fiscal Policy proposed by Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain, and calls upon all who are interested in our commercial prosperity and the social condition of the people to resist by every means in their power proposals which, if adopted, will raise the price of food and all manufactured goods, reduce trade by increasing the cost of production ; involve us in a war of tariffs ; endanger our relations with our Colonies ; and threaten the stability of the Empire.

"Further, the Committee affirms that a far better method of increasing trade and improving the condition of the people would be found in the thorough reform of the existing Land System and Licensing Laws."

THE GOVERNMENT'S RECORD.

2nd Resolution.—Moved by Mr. Francis D. Acland (Liberal Candidate, Richmond Division of Yorkshire), seconded by Mr. Thomas Lough, M.P. (Islington, West), and supported by Dr. T. J.

e words printed in italics were added to the resolutions with the consent of the Committee and on the recommendation of the Executive. These added paragraphs were sent up as Notices of Motion by the Halifax Liberal Association (Rider to 1st Resolution), the North Cumberland and Carlisle Liberal Associations (Amendment to 2nd Resolution), and Bolton Liberal Association (Amendment to 3rd Resolution) respectively.

Macnamara, M.P. (Camberwell, North), and Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Bart., M.P. (Camborne Division of Cornwall) :—

“That, in the opinion of this Meeting of the General Committee of the National Liberal Federation, the present Government neither possesses nor deserves the confidence of the Country.

“In particular, the Committee emphatically condemns the Education Acts of 1902 and 1903, and expresses the conviction that the Education Question can never be settled save by legislation which will place under popular control all Elementary Schools maintained out of public funds, and will relieve the teachers in such schools from all religious tests.

“Further, the Committee condemns the action of the Government in promising legislation which must in effect constitute a fresh Endowment of the Liquor Interest.

“The Committee places on record the expression of its indignation at the revelations contained in the Report of the South African War Commission; views with the utmost concern the enormous growth of annual National Expenditure under Tory Administration; and considers the continued conduct of public affairs by the present Government to be a grave danger to the State.”

THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION.

3rd Resolution.—Moved by Mr. F. S. Stevenson, M.P. (Eye Division of Suffolk), and seconded by Alderman W. B. Bowring (President of the Exchange [Liverpool] Liberal Association) :—

“That this Meeting of the General Committee of the National Liberal Federation, having regard to the direct responsibility of this country as the signatory to the Berlin Treaty principally responsible for placing Macedonia under the heel of Turkey, and in view of the fact that Turkey has failed to carry out the conditions of that Treaty as regards Macedonia, and is at present engaged in destroying by wholesale massacre the inhabitants of that country, calls upon His Majesty's Government to take such steps, *in conjunction with other European Powers*, as are necessary to put an end to these massacres and to emancipate Macedonia from the direct rule of the Sultan.”

On the invitation of Mr. Edward Evans, junr. (President of the Liverpool Liberal Federal Council), the Delegates and other representative Liberals were entertained at Tea at the close of the General Committee Meeting, and in the evening a public meeting was held in the Picton Hall, under the auspices of the Liverpool Liberal Federal Council, at which Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C. (President of the National Liberal Federation), and Mr. Walter Runciman, Junr., M.P., were the principal speakers.

(c)—The Annual Meeting.

(AT LEEDS, *February 26th*, 1904.)

The Annual Business Meeting of the General Committee was held at Leeds on Friday, February 26th. The chair was, in the first instance, taken by Mr. Augustine Birrell. Mr. Edward Evans, jun., was—for the ninth time—unanimously elected Chairman of Committee.

Mr. Evans having assumed the Chair and returned thanks for his re-election, the delegates proceeded to the election of the Executive Committee, the following twenty gentlemen being elected:—

	VOTES.
MR. PERCY HOLDEN ILLINGWORTH (Shipley Division of Yorkshire)	191
DR. ROBERT SPENCE WATSON (Vice-President of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Liberal Association) - - - - -	178
MR. ARNOLD S. ROWNTREE (Hon. Secretary of the York Liberal Association) - - - - -	175
MR. FRANK WRIGHT (President of the Birmingham Liberal Association) - - - - -	168
MR. W. H. DICKINSON (Chairman of the London Liberal Federation) - - - - -	166
MR. R. C. LEHMANN (South Bucks Liberal Association) - -	166
MR. J. F. L. BRUNNER (Cheshire Liberal Federal Council) -	164
MR. FRANCIS DYKE ACLAND (Richmond Division of Yorkshire)	162
MR. ROBERT BIRD (Vice-President of the Cardiff Liberal Association) - - - - -	157
MR. W. HOWELL DAVIES (President of the South Bristol Liberal Association) - - - - -	149
MR. ALFRED BARRAN (Vice-President of the North Leeds Liberal Association) - - - - -	147
MR. A. H. BURGESS (Hon. Secretary of the Harborough Division [Leicestershire] Liberal Association) - - -	145
MR. P. W. BUNTING (President of the South St. Pancras Liberal Association) - - - - -	144
MR. CHARLES H. RADFORD (President of the Plymouth Liberal Association) - - - - -	144
MR. E. T. ANN (President of the Derby Liberal Association) -	142
MR. J. E. WILLANS (Vice-President of the Huddersfield Liberal Association) - - - - -	142
MR. J. A. MURRAY MACDONALD (President of the Bow and Bromley Liberal and Radical Association) - - -	139
MR. HUGH FULLERTON (MANCHESTER) - - - - -	136

	VOTES.
MR. D. M. MASON (Home Counties Division of the National Liberal Federation) - - - - -	130
MR. HERBERT G. WHIBLEY (President of the Cambridge Liberal Association) : - - - - -	118

Not Elected.

MR. CHARLES T. MACAULAY (Vice-President of the Frome Division [Somerset] Liberal Association).

MR. ALPHEUS C. MORTON (Vice-President of the Clapham Liberal and Radical Association).

Of the twenty members elected as above, Mr. Francis D. Acland, Mr. Percy Illingworth, Mr. Arnold S. Rowntree, and Mr. Herbert G. Whibley are elected for the first time.

Mr. W. Ryland D. Adkins, Dr. John Clifford, and Mr. W. E. B. Priestley were not eligible for re-election under the retirement clause of the Federation Rules, and Mr. W. S. Rowntree did not seek re-election by reason of the many other public claims in the North of England upon his available leisure.

Mr. D. M. Mason on retiring from the Hon. Secretaryship of the Home Counties Federation resigned his seat on the Executive Committee, and in his stead the Committee have elected (under Rule V.) Sir Arthur S. Wells, Bart., Mr. Mason's successor in the office of Hon. Secretary to the Home Counties Federation.

PROTECTION.

The following resolution, submitted by the Executive Committee, was moved by Sir James Kitson, Bart., M.P. (Yorkshire—Colne Valley Division), seconded by Sir James T. Woodhouse, M.P. (Huddersfield), supported by Lord Brassey, K.C.B., and carried unanimously :—

“That this General Committee of the National Liberal Federation, whilst reiterating its former declarations upon the revolution in our Fiscal Policy proposed by Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain, recognises that the course of recent events has shown that the preservation of the country from the evils of Protection and the Taxation of Food depends upon the determined and organised opposition of the Liberal Party, and calls upon all who are alive to these dangers to join in saving the country from them.”

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COUNTRY.

The following resolution, also submitted by the Executive Committee, was moved by Mr. J. Bamford Slack, M.P. (Hertfordshire—

St. Albans Division), seconded by Mr. W. H. Dickinson (Chairman of the London Liberal Federation), and carried unanimously :—

“That this General Committee of the National Liberal Federation recognises in the King's Speech an acknowledgment by the Government of its incapacity to initiate any legislation of prime importance, but regrets to observe amongst the proposed measures the prominence given to a Bill which must, by interfering with the discretion of the Magistrates, create a fresh endowment of the Liquor Interest.

“The Committee, having regard to the Parliamentary situation, and to the evidence afforded by the By-Elections, protests against the continuance in office of a Government which has already been deprived of its strongest Members, and has, by its mismanagement and maladministration, lost all title to confidence or respect.”

CHINESE LABOUR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

The following resolution, also submitted by the Executive Committee, was moved by Dr. John Massie (Treasurer of the National Liberal Federation), seconded by Mr. Percy Illingworth (Yorkshire—Shipley Division), and carried unanimously :—

“That this General Committee of the National Liberal Federation protests against the Imperial Government giving its assent to any measure permitting the importation of indentured Chinese labour into the Transvaal.”

TAXATION AND EXPENDITURE.

The following resolution, submitted by the Bradford Liberal Association, was moved by Mr. H. B. Priestman (President of the Bradford Liberal Association), seconded by Mr. H. H. Spencer (Bradford), and carried unanimously :—

“That this General Committee of the National Liberal Federation affirms that the internal burdens on trade, caused by excessive taxation and by the land and liquor monopolies, are far greater than any foreign tariffs have been or can be, and that the policy of a Liberal Government should include retrenchment of National Expenditure, a drastic reform of the licensing laws, the taxation of Land Values for local and imperial purposes, accompanied by an abatement of local rates on the houses of the people, and the remission of all taxes on food.”

At the conclusion of the meeting the Delegates were entertained at tea by the Officers of the Leeds Liberal Federation, and in the evening a public meeting, under the auspices of the Leeds Liberal Federation, addressed by Mr. W. S. Robson, K.C., M.P., Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C., the Countess of Aberdeen, Mrs. James Bryce, the Lord Brassey.,

K.C.B., Mr. J. Bamford Slack, M.P., and others, was held in the Coliseum, when the following resolution was unanimously carried :—

“That this meeting cordially approves of the resolutions adopted by the General Committee of the National Liberal Federation this afternoon, and is of opinion that the present Government neither possesses nor deserves the confidence of the country.

“The meeting emphatically protests against

- (1) The unjust and reactionary Education Act ;
- (2) The gross mismanagement by the Government of the South African War, as revealed by the Report of the War Commission ;
- (3) The reckless manner in which the Ministry has increased the ordinary annual expenditure of the Nation ;
- (4) The threatened action of the Government further to endow the Liquor Interest ; and
- (5) The introduction, with the sanction of the Government, of indentured Chinese labour into the Transvaal.

“Finally, this meeting earnestly hopes that the electors will once and for all reject the proposals of Mr. Chamberlain and the Prime Minister to re-introduce Protection, and pledges itself to resist by every means in its power the attempt to re-impose taxation upon the food of the people.”

DISTRICT CONFERENCE.

On the invitation of the Ipswich and Suffolk Liberal Associations a District Conference of representative Liberals from the counties of Suffolk, Norfolk, the Newmarket Division of Cambridge and the Northern Constituencies of Essex, was held at Ipswich on the afternoon of Wednesday, December 16th.

Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C. (President of the National Liberal Federation), occupied the Chair.

There was a numerous and thoroughly representative attendance including the Liberal Members of Parliament and the prospective Liberal Candidates for the constituencies in the counties named.

After an opening speech by the Chairman, the following resolutions were submitted.

THE FISCAL QUESTION.

1st Resolution.—Moved by Mr. R. J. Price, M.P. (Norfolk, Eastern Division), seconded by Mr. A. W. Soames, M.P. (Norfolk, Southern Division), supported by Mr. G. A. Hardy (Suffolk, Stowmarket Division), Mr. J. Martin White (Great Yarmouth),

Mr. E. Beauchamp (Suffolk, Lowestoft Division), Mr. A. Levy Lever (Essex, Harwich Division), and unanimously carried :—

“That this Conference strongly condemns the reversal of our Fiscal Policy proposed by Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain, and calls upon all who are interested in our commercial prosperity and the social condition of the people to resist by every means in their power proposals which, if adopted, will raise the price of food and all manufactured goods, reduce trade by increasing the cost of production, involve us in a war of tariffs, endanger our relations with our Colonies, and threaten the stability of the Empire.

“Further, the Conference affirms that a truer method of maintaining and improving our position in the world of commerce and of bettering the condition of our people is to be found in raising the standard of Education, primary, secondary and technical, in amending the Licensing Laws and so promoting Temperance, and in a thorough reform of the existing Land System.”

THE GOVERNMENT'S RECORD.

2nd Resolution.—Moved by Mr. John Massie (Ipswich), seconded by Sir W. Brampton Gurdon, K.C.M.G., C.B., M.P. (Norfolk, Northern Division), supported by Mr. D. Ford Goddard, M.P. (Ipswich), Mr. F. W. Wilson, M.P. (Norfolk, Mid Division), Mr. George White, M.P. (Norfolk, North-Western Division), and Mr. W. C. Heaton Armstrong (Suffolk, Sudbury Division), and unanimously carried :—

“That in the opinion of this Conference the present Government neither possesses nor deserves the confidence of the Country.

“In particular, the Conference emphatically condemns the Education Acts of 1902 and 1903, and expresses the conviction that the Education Question can never be settled save by legislation which will place under popular control all Elementary Schools maintained out of public funds, and will relieve the teachers in such schools from all religious tests.

“The Conference places on record the expression of its indignation at the revelations contained in the Report of the South African War Commission; views with the utmost concern the enormous growth of Annual National Expenditure under Tory Administration; and considers the continued conduct of public affairs by the present Government to be a grave danger to the State.”

THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION.

3rd Resolution.—Moved by Mr. F. S. Stevenson, M.P. (Suffolk, Eye Division), seconded by Mr. R. L. Everett (Suffolk, Woodbridge Division), and unanimously carried :—

“That this Conference, having regard to the direct responsibility of this country as the signatory to the Berlin Treaty principally responsible for placing Macedonia under the heel of Turkey, and in view of the fact that

Turkey has failed to carry out the conditions of that Treaty as regards Macedonia, and is at present engaged in destroying by wholesale massacre the inhabitants of that country, calls upon His Majesty's Government to take such steps, in conjunction with other European Powers, as are necessary to put an end to these massacres and to emancipate Macedonia from the direct rule of the Sultan."

At the conclusion of the Conference, Mr. F. S. Stevenson, M.P., President of the Ipswich Liberal Association, entertained the delegates to Tea, and in the evening presided at a Great Meeting held under the auspices of that Association in the Public Hall, at which meeting Mr. Asquith was the principal speaker.

Mr. Asquith was supported on the Platform by Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C. (President of the National Liberal Federation) and by a large number of Members of Parliament, Candidates and other Liberals representative of East Anglia.

NATIONAL LIBERAL CAMPAIGN FUND.

At the last Annual Meeting of the Federation the Committee recommended the important step of forming a National Liberal Campaign Fund such as would enable the Federation properly to take in hand the urgent work of organising the constituencies, and educating the electorate on the political issues which the next General Election must determine.

The appeal met with an instant and generous response, and the Federation has been enabled for the past twelve months to render help of the highest value in bringing the constituencies of England and Wales into a condition of preparedness for the General Election.

A total of £32,000 has been subscribed to the Fund, but more is required if the assistance which the Federation is giving in necessitous constituencies is to be continued and, indeed, increased as it ought to be in view of the close approach of a General Election. The Committee believe that there has never been a time when the Liberal party in the English and Welsh constituencies was in better array for battle. On the other hand the issues to be decided are so momentous that it has never been more incumbent upon the party to put forth its utmost exertions. We have not merely to win the next General Election, but to win it so decisively that the reaction of the past few years, the attack upon

Free Trade, and the inroads upon the principles of Religious Equality, Educational Efficiency, and National Economy shall be seen no more in our day and generation.

The Committee makes an earnest appeal to all such members of the Federation as have not yet contributed to the Fund. There must be thousands of Liberals in the country who, without any lessening of the support which they rightly give to their local organisations, could at a time like the present aid the national fund by their contributions, however small may be the individual gifts.

The work which lies before us is at once urgent and essential. It rests with those whom the Committee now address to enable the Federation not merely to continue its labours in this field but largely to increase and extend its activities during such time as remains for the work.

THE WINTER CAMPAIGN.

The following Manifesto was issued by the Federation on October 17th, 1903 :—

THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

The present Political Situation is so unprecedented and the date of the Dissolution of Parliament so uncertain that no excuse need be offered for any effort on the part of this Federation to make plain to our affiliated Liberal Associations what are the real issues before the Electorate.

Of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet as it exists to-day nothing is to be hoped, if little need be feared. The Free Importers, one and all, have at different dates and with varied degrees of information abandoned Mr. Balfour to his fate, whilst Mr. Chamberlain has also left him in order the more effectively to preach a crusade against our National System of Finance.

On this Fiscal Question, Mr. Chamberlain is the real Prime Minister, not without direct personal representation in the Cabinet itself, for it is no secret that the new Chancellor of the Exchequer is the *alter ego* of the late Colonial Secretary. It is round Mr. Chamberlain and his policy that the battle is raging, and will continue to rage.

Nothing need be said here to arouse all Liberals and Radicals, and, indeed, the sober-minded men of every shade of politics, to the absolute necessity of defeating Mr. Chamberlain at the polls. He has thought fit, without consulting his colleagues, to challenge our National policy of Finance, to demand its complete reversal, to make himself the mouthpiece of Protection, and to propose taxes on the bread and meat of the people. The Prime Minister, it now appears, shares Mr. Chamberlain's faith, but for Party reasons thinks it wisest to content himself for the present with an

invocation of the blessings of Heaven upon the missionary labours of his former colleague—and (it may be) his future chief.

The whole structure of Mr. Chamberlain's case for a reversal of our National Finance appears to us to be unsound from top to bottom. The Colonies, so far as is known, are *not* on the eve of separation, and altogether refuse to become disloyal even at the bidding of an ex-Colonial Secretary. The proposals made by Mr. Chamberlain to secure their continued loyalty to the Empire do not appear to have excited much Colonial enthusiasm, and in the opinion of competent observers on the spot would, if they ever came seriously to be discussed, be far more likely to create ill-feeling than to purchase loyalty. So far as Canada is concerned it has already been made abundantly plain that she values her complete legislative and fiscal independence even more than she does her proud place as the greatest Dominion of the British Empire. What her manufacturers and men of commerce will say to Mr. Chamberlain's proposal that they are to enter into a self-denying ordinance never at any time and in any circumstances to extend the number of their manufactures or to conquer new fields of commerce in competition with Great Britain, it is easy to foretell. "So much," if we may quote Mr. Balfour's far more happy language at Sheffield, "So much for the Colonial branch of the question." Mr. Chamberlain's case rests upon a false assumption.

Nor is our own state at home either desperate or gloomy. We need not go further than Germany, to hear on all sides sad stories of British competition. The Blue Book issued by the Government, giving the results of their own inquiry as to the state of our Trade, shows that it is in a prosperous state, whilst it is far from true, as Mr. Chamberlain vainly pretends, that all Protectionist countries are enjoying a social millennium, from which our "Cobdenism" shuts us out. The lot of the poor man is always harsh, and there are clouds on all social horizons, but it is the bare truth to say that the clouds on our horizon are less black and lowering than those plainly visible in other lands.

Mr. Chamberlain's figures are never to be relied upon and illustrate nothing so clearly as the recklessness of his nature and the crudity of his latest opinions.

But no one can witness, without consternation, this sudden hurling of our Fiscal System into the fierce cauldron of Party strife. There are always in a great industrial community like ours some trades that are depressed, some occupations that are shifting; employment is not always to be had, and wages, unhappily, are often low. Grave, indeed, is the responsibility of any man of influence who will take upon himself to say that he knows a plan whereby work will be constant and wages always high. Mr. Balfour, to do him justice, is not a man of this sort. His language is always guarded; nor is he given to cheerful prophecy; but his late colleague is one who, to get his own way, will tell every depressed industry, and every man who is unemployed, from one end of the kingdom to the other, that the ills they suffer from are curable by Protection.

On this great issue our Federation has, through the Liberal Publication

Department, done its best to supply to the constituencies leaflets and pamphlets dealing with the Fiscal Question. In this connection the Committee gratefully acknowledge the great service which is also being rendered by the Free Trade Union. Mr. Chamberlain is generally reported to expect one electoral defeat, and then to be rewarded with a great victory. Let it be our recognised business to help to make his first defeat so decisive as for ever to banish the hope of ultimate success from the mind of the most rabid Protectionist.

But we must not, in our zeal for open markets and cheap bread and meat, fall into the trap so plainly laid for us, and in our alarm for the future forget the misdeeds of the past.

In this connection we venture to call your attention to two recent publications of our Department. The first is entitled "Eight Years of Tory Government: 1895 to 1903: Home Affairs," and the second is a Summary and Analysis of the Report and Evidence of the South African War Commission.

A country which could allow such a report as the one just mentioned to pass over its head as a matter of small account must have lost not only its self-respect as a nation esteeming itself a Military Power, but also all the instincts of self-government. It is no mere War Office affair. The worst blunders were not those of the War Office. The real head and front of the offending was the ignorance, indifference, and ineptitude of the Cabinet itself, which seemed to think nothing of the dread possibilities of war. "A conscientious man," wrote Burke in his letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, "would be cautious how he dealt in blood. He would feel some apprehension at being called to a tremendous account for engaging in so deep a play without any knowledge of the game," and the writer goes on to rejoice, on behalf of his friends and himself, that "no man's life pays the forfeit of our rashness. No desolate widow weeps tears of blood over our ignorance." These are consolations denied to the Cabinet of the War.

Another issue before the Country is the Financial Record of the past eight years. Nothing cuts deeper than Finance. In the Budgets of States may be read their history and their epitaph.

The total cost of the war was £224,786,000. Of this sum, £65,610,000 has been paid already out of the pockets of the people, £34,000,000 is to be repaid by the Transvaal, and the balance of £125,176,000 is comfortably tied round the neck of posterity. In 1895, when the Liberals were last in office, the National Debt stood at £633,891,936; to-day it stands at £768,580,400, and you may buy in the market £100 of the National Debt for £89.

Nor must the ordinary expenditure of the Nation be overlooked. In 1895, a sum of £94,684,000 paid the Nation's bill and left a surplus. In 1903, a sum of £151,552,000 was insufficient to discharge the *ordinary* expenditure of a single year, whilst the annual expenditure on Naval and Military Armaments has expanded from £35,595,000 in 1895 to £60,825,000 in 1903.

If it be true that we can bear this huge expenditure without flinching, what a tribute to the national prosperity now rudely threatened. But no sane man can scan these figures without dismay. Is it necessary? What do we get for it? are questions both pertinent and patriotic.

No true Liberal will forget the Doles squandered by the Government on its "friends" out of a full Exchequer before the war. Two and a-half millions a year is still distributable under this head.

The effect of the Sugar Convention Act of 1903 must be closely followed. Under its provisions a Foreign Commission, in which Great Britain has one vote out of nine, settles by a majority at what rate the sugar entering this country is to be taxed. The strange enemy we are fighting is cheap sugar. Time will soon reveal the result of the warfare. There are two places on which to keep our eyes fixed—our West Indian Islands and our own Sugar Market. In time we shall discover whether the Convention restores prosperity to the Islands and what price the British manufacturer and householder is being made to pay for a necessary article of food.

It is impossible to write the words *Elementary Education* without shame and indignation. The Liberal Party have unequivocally promised that the first use to which they will put any power that may be conferred upon them will be to amend the Acts of 1902 and 1903 so as to place all rate-aided elementary schools, without distinction, under popular control, and to secure that no Elementary Teacher in a rate-aided school shall be subjected to any religious test whatsoever. Schools that will not subject themselves to this popular control need not close their doors, but they must do without the compulsory subscriptions of men and women who do not share the religious tenets there implanted. This is a plain issue and one that will be fought out to the end. The constituencies are already quite alive to it. No candidate could overlook it if he would. If Mr. Chamberlain ever imagined that his Preferential Duties would overshadow the Education Question he must already have discovered his mistake. Even Birmingham has not yet forgotten her School Board.

In Eastern Europe, once again "the vales redouble to the hills, and they to heaven" the moans of an unhappy population whom the Turk, not content to misgovern, is determined to destroy. The two great neighbouring Powers have indeed interfered, but not to protect Macedonia, only to forbid the Bulgarians from going to the assistance of their kin across the border. It is idle to arraign Austria and Russia. Great Britain has had a hand in this bedevilment, and her right to interfere is only too plain. The Executive Committee has already passed, and caused to be circulated among all our Associations, a Resolution on this subject, which we again commend to your notice.

A word before we conclude must be given to the great Licensing Question. If Temperance Reformers do not at the next General Election, whatever their general politics may be, unite in opposing the declared policy of the Government, they must give up any hope they ever had of living to see a substantial reduction in the number of licensed houses, and at the same time they must be prepared to see abandoned the valuable legal

principles declared in the cases of *Sharpe v. Wakefield* and the *Farnham Magistrates*, and to admit the principle of public compensation.

The National Liberal Campaign Fund started by the Federation last May has now reached a sum of £29,308 2s. 0d., and we still hope that the total originally aimed at of £50,000 may eventually be attained. The necessity of such a Fund if the next General Election is to be won has been made very plain indeed to the Committee to whom the task of its administration has been entrusted, for the really urgent demands already made upon them exceed the funds at their disposal.

The consideration of the issues at stake at the next General Election will surely prompt every Liberal, who has the means, to contribute to this Fund which is open to all.

After too long a period of depression and divided counsels, the Liberal Party has become united because once more in earnest, and therefore it is in a spirit of confidence that we appeal to our Federated Associations to spare no exertion to secure at the next General Election a great and much needed victory for the People.

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL,

President.

EDWD. EVANS, JUN.,

Chairman of Committee.

JOHN MASSIE,

Treasurer.

ROBERT A. HUDSON,

Secretary.

FRANK BARTER,

Assistant-Secretary.

THE LIBERAL PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT.

The past year has been one in which continued good service has been rendered to the party by the Liberal Publication Department, for which the Federation is, with the Liberal Central Association, jointly responsible. The amount of work done has been unprecedented, and it has been done with promptitude, skill, discretion and unflinching accuracy.

A great and immediate success has attended the scheme by which, for one inclusive yearly payment of a guinea, a subscriber of that amount gets all the publications of the Department as issued, and at the end of the year the two bound volumes—the *Liberal Magazine* and *Pamphlets and Leaflets*. For the first year (1903) there were upwards of 750 subscribers, whilst for the present year the number is well over 900, and will, it is hoped, reach a thousand. The advantages of this inclusive subscription only need to be known to be appreciated, and it is especially recommended in the case of Liberal

Clubs, who by this method get an ample supply both of current literature and of invaluable works for the reference library.

The *Liberal Magazine* is in its twelfth volume, but happily shows no sign of decrepitude in what must now be accounted middle age. The average monthly circulation for 1903 shows an increase of 500 over the previous year, the following figures showing the great progress made in the last few years :—

1898	...	..	...	...	...	1,989
1901	...	...	...	...	...	2,691
1902	...	...	...	...	...	2,837
1903	...	...	...	...	...	3,330

The sales for 1904 show that the circulation is now never less than 3,500 a month.

An unusually large number of publications of various kinds were issued during 1903, the sales of leaflets alone having been nearly nine millions. The Handbook "Eight Years of Tory Government" brings the story of Tory misrule up to the end of the Session of 1903. It was in the nature of things that most of the publications should be concerned with the Fiscal question, but the task has not been overlooked of dealing with such other questions as Education, the War Report, and Chinese Labour. The little booklets have been found to be particularly popular and useful, and to "The Blessings of Tory Rule" have now been added "Enquire Within upon everything about Mr. Chamberlain's Proposals," "The Peril of the Empire" (the story of the War Report), and "Mr. Chamberlain's Proposals: Their Effect upon Wages and Employment." One or other of these has been used in almost all the by-elections, in which it may also be mentioned that the Department has in a variety of other ways rendered great service.

The Record of Members' Votes (or, as it is usually called, the "Recording Angel") is now complete from 1866 up to 1903. The *Divisions of the Month* are issued monthly, and for the nominal fee of 5s. a year the votes of any Unionist M.P. in these selected divisions can be obtained each month. A weekly Record of Divisions (particularly suitable for publication in the press) can also be supplied by special arrangement.

The Department has continued to supply *Lantern Lectures* and has issued *Coloured Posters*, a particularly effective series of posters being now in preparation for the General Election.

A very large amount of work has been thrown upon the Department by its undertaking the publication of the leaflets and posters issued by the Free Trade Union.

Unceasing efforts have been made to be prepared for the Dissolution whenever it may come, and it is confidently believed that the result of these efforts will be that the Department will be able to render greater service at the next General Election than it has ever done at any previous one. The staff and warehouse accommodation have had to be increased to meet the very considerable growth in the business and activities of the Department.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT.

No review of the political incidents of the past twelve months would be complete without direct and special mention of the regret with which Liberals everywhere have received the announcement by Sir William Harcourt that he does not intend to offer himself for re-election at the expiry of the present Parliament.

For five and thirty years Sir William Harcourt has played a notable part in the Parliamentary life of this country. His withdrawal from the House of Commons is a loss, not merely to the Liberal party, but to Parliament and to the State. If Sir William Harcourt had done nothing more than pass the great Finance Act of 1894 he would have gained and rightly deserved the lasting gratitude of every Liberal in the land.

At no fewer than eight Annual Meetings of this Federation Sir William Harcourt has taken part in our proceedings. The Committee hope and believe that his retirement from the House of Commons will not involve his withdrawal from political activity. They note with peculiar satisfaction that he has recently allowed himself to be re-elected as President of the Home Counties division of the Federation, and they hope that for many years to come Liberalism will have the advantage of the powerful advocacy and support he has given to it, at great self-sacrifice, over a period of so many years.

THE BY-ELECTIONS.

The proper point of departure in considering the by-elections is the introduction in 1902 of the Corn Tax and the Education Bill ; for up to that time the country remained in the khaki atmosphere in which the General Election was fought. Since March, 1902, there have been in Great Britain (excluding the Orkney and Shetland contest) thirty contested elections—Bury, North Leeds, Sevenoaks, Devonport, Cleveland, East Toxteth, Newmarket, West Derby, Woolwich, Rye, Chertsey, Camborne, Preston, Barnard Castle, Argyll, St. Andrew's Burghs, Rochester, Leamington, Chorley, Dulwich, Lewisham, Ludlow, Mid-Devon, Norwich, Gateshead, Ayr Burghs, Mid-Herts, South Birmingham, Normanton, and East Dorset. With the two exceptions of Devonport and Rochester there has been an improvement of the Liberal position, in most cases an enormous improvement. The result in seats is as follows :—

1885	{ L 16 C 14	...	L majority	...	2
1892	{ L 11 C 19	...	C majority	...	8
1900	{ L 7 C 23	...	C majority	...	16
<i>By-Elections, 1902-4</i>	{ L 17 C 13	...	L majority	...	4

It will be noticed that the Liberal position is not only immensely better than in 1900 but also than in 1892 and 1885.

The result in votes is even more remarkable :—

	<i>1900 (or last previous By-Elections contest).</i>			
			<i>1902-4.</i>	
Ministerialist vote	140,319	...	138,649	—a decrease of 1·2 per cent.
Opposition vote...	101,005	...	146,727	—an increase of 45 per cent.

	Majority	...	C	39,314	L	8,078
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For the seventeen by-elections which have taken place since Mr. Chamberlain last May propounded his Protectionist policy, the figures are :—

	1900 (or last previous contest).	By-Elections 1903-4.	
Ministerialist vote	73,120	...	75,139—an increase of 2·7 per cent.
Opposition vote...	57,476	...	81,870—an increase of 42 per cent.
Majority	...	C 15,644	L 6,731

The increase in the Liberal vote is enormous whilst the Unionist vote is practically "stagnant" (to use a favourite adjective of Mr. Chamberlain's). For every 20 electors who voted Liberal in 1900 there are now 29.

The figures as to votes for the last twelve months are particularly noteworthy :—

<i>The Government have in Votes</i>						
			LOST.	GAINED.		
Preston	...	...	1,522	...	...	—
Barnard Castle	...	...	1,365	...	...	—
Argyll	...	...	2,186	...	...	—
St. Andrew's Burghs	...	...	90	...	...	—
Rochester	...	...	—	...	...	42
Leamington	...	...	641	...	...	—
Chorley	...	...	1,631	...	...	—
Dulwich	...	...	1,645	..	...	—
Lewisham	...	...	402	...	...	—
Ludlow	...	...	2,849	...	...	—
Mid-Devon...	...	...	705	...	...	—
Norwich	...	...	5,091	...	...	—
Gateshead	...	...	259	...	...	—
Ayr Burghs	...	...	634	...	...	—
Mid-Herts	...	...	976	...	...	—
South Birmingham	...	...	497	...	...	—
Normanton	...	...	2,527	...	...	—
East Dorset	...	...	916	...	...	—
			<u>23,936</u>	<u>42</u>		
<i>Net loss 23,894.</i>						

Taking, however, the whole period since the General Election, the Government have lost thirteen seats and only gained two (that in Lanark owing to a third candidature) :—

GOVERNMENT LOSSES (13).

Galway (*to Nationalists*)
 Bury
 North Leeds
 Orkney and Shetland
 Newmarket
 Woolwich
 Rye
 Argyll
 St. Andrew's Burghs
 Norwich
 Ayr Burghs
 Mid-Herts
 East Dorset

GAINS (2).

N.E. Lanark
 Devonport

It has also to be remembered that (a) Sir Michael Foster, Mr. J. W. Wilson, and Mr. John Wilson (Falkirk), elected as Liberal Unionists, have severed their connection with the Ministerialists, (b) the Government have lost two seats in Ireland to Land Purchase Members, and (c) Major Seely is now not a supporter of the Government, but an independent Unionist, since the Government did not dare to challenge his re-election in the Isle of Wight.

 EDUCATION.

The Government succeeded last year in passing the London Education Bill, though, thanks to the keen opposition which it encountered, it was deprived of most of the special indignities which Ministers wished to inflict upon London, as compared with the rest of the country. But if London was, in the end of the day, treated no worse, it was certainly treated no better, and, for one thing, it was particularly wanton and gratuitous to abolish the London School Board, whose admirable services should have saved it from the hands even of the enemies of the *ad hoc* principle. It is to be noted, moreover, that whilst the Government have insisted upon abandoning the *ad hoc* principle for England and Wales as a pernicious, wasteful, and discredited doctrine, they have expressly retained it for Scotland in the Bill recently introduced. It is difficult to see why there should be this differential treatment as between parts of the same United Kingdom.

The result of the two Education Acts of 1902 and 1903 is precisely what might have been anticipated. As a general rule, once a measure is placed upon the statute-book it passes out of the controversial stage, since the people of this country are happily inveterate law-keepers. But if in ordinary circumstances an Englishman knows when he is beaten he also knows when he is cheated, and he bitterly resents educational legislation of an objectionable kind being forced upon him by a majority obtained on a wholly different issue at a General Election from which the ordinary domestic issues (such as Education) were explicitly excluded by such authoritative Ministerialist spokesmen as Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain. More, the Nonconformist citizen finds himself called upon to pay rates towards the maintenance of Church of England schools left under Church management, and with the teachers subject to a religious test. The result has been the growth in England of the Passive Resistance movement, the ratepayer declining to pay voluntarily, and only paying under the compulsion of law by the distraint of his goods. Already more than 20,000 of the most law-abiding of our citizens have adopted this course, and it is calculated that at least 60,000 more are prepared to do so. It is easy to sneer at this (as Mr. Balfour does), but it is a remarkable conscientious protest, and those who make light of it seem to forget the history of how Church Rates came to be abolished. In Wales the resistance to the Act has taken another form. On every County Council there is a majority pledged not to give rate aid to any non-provided school so long as it is privately managed and has denominational tests for its teachers. It remains to be seen how the Government propose to disprove the proverbial truth that you cannot indict a nation, for that is the task which lies before them if the Welsh County Councils are to be coerced into submission.

It is already agreed that some further legislation is imperative before the education question can be regarded as "settled." That is beyond question, and the air is thick with rumour of compromises and concordats. On that point, it can only be reiterated that the Liberal party is pledged to such alteration of the law as will secure for the country a truly national system of education, based on effective popular control, and freed altogether from religious tests and sectarian influences.

FISCAL POLICY.

The last stage in Mr. Chamberlain's "Rake's Progress" is his appearance as a full-blown Protectionist. The Corn Tax having been imposed in 1902 as a mere registration duty for revenue purposes only, Mr. Chamberlain conceived the notion of using it as a means of beginning a policy of preference. Thanks to the firmness of Mr. Ritchie he was defeated in the attempt, but in his own elegant phraseology he is not accustomed to take defeat "lying down," and the contest was transferred from the Cabinet to the constituencies in the memorable speech at Birmingham last May. It may be admitted that there was every inducement to try and strike out a new line of country. Mr. Chamberlain, though fully responsible for the Education Act, was not foolish enough to imagine that it is anything but a failure. It could not be long before the War Commission would confirm the worst that the critics of the Government had said about the conduct of the war, and the state of preparation and diplomacy preceding it. The Khaki issue had been a great and glorious success in 1900; why not try it again in a slightly different form by launching the proposition that every vote given against Preference was a vote given against the Empire? That, at all events, was the new departure made last May. The moment had arrived, so we were assured, when we had to decide what the fate of the Empire was to be. We were at the parting of the ways; ours it was to decide what our answer should be to the Colonial "offer," which it would be criminal to neglect. It was not, because it could not be, denied that this involved a tax on food, but there was to be an Old Age Pension, and in some mysterious way nobody was to be a penny the worse, and everybody a great many pennies the better.

The character of Mr. Chamberlain's campaign has changed a good deal since then, for once again Old Age Pensions have been dropped, whilst little is heard of the Colonial "offer," though no little is said of the virtues of a scientific tariff which is to protect the home manufacturer and give his workmen higher wages and full continuous employment. The fisherman has changed his bait, but the fish seem no more attracted by the new bait than by the old. This change, however, did not take place all at once. In the early stages Mr. Balfour kept his

Government together by muzzling the House of Commons and pretending that an inquiry was being held for the determination of "unsettled convictions" on fiscal policy. That device, though it deceived nobody, did its work, in that the Government held together until the end of the Session. When the Cabinet met to decide what its policy should be, the trouble began. Mr. Balfour himself presented two documents. The first, since published as a pamphlet, was merely in favour of freedom of negotiation—we were to abandon our Free-trade basis by being prepared, if necessary, to put on Retaliatory Tariffs against a foreign country whom we wish to coerce into a lower tariff. The second advocated a policy of preference, including a tax on food, and it was this document (which is *not* to be published) which led to the break-up of the Cabinet. It became clear that Free Trade was no longer Mr. Balfour's policy, and the Duke of Devonshire, Mr. Ritchie, and Lord George Hamilton all tendered their resignations. Mr. Balfour, having Mr. Chamberlain's resignation in his pocket, revealed it to the Duke and kept him in the Cabinet for another fortnight. But the trick failed so soon as Mr. Balfour had himself to speak on the platform, and by mid-October Mr. Balfour found himself without his Free-trade colleagues—the Duke of Devonshire, Mr. Ritchie, Lord G. Hamilton, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, and the Hon. Arthur Elliot—whilst Mr. Chamberlain had resigned in order to be free to "go" what his supporters are accustomed to call "the whole hog." For the Government at one step to have become openly Protectionist would have been too rash a step, but the real complexion of the Ministry was never in doubt, since Mr. Austen Chamberlain, whom no one has ever accused of not being a faithful Chamberlainite, was ostentatiously promoted to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, and other of the new or promoted Ministers were known to be Tariff Reformers.

The autumn was occupied by Mr. Chamberlain's campaign, which very soon became of an out-and-out Protectionist character, the Imperial note being merely reserved for perorations. The "raging, tearing" propaganda made a great deal of noise and commotion, but it was singularly ineffective, partly owing to the inherent weakness of the case presented, partly owing to the way in which Mr. Chamberlain was dealt with, not merely by Liberals but by Free-traders of all

parties. The people of this country show no enthusiasm for a tax on food, even when Mr. Chamberlain pledges his word that no one will have to pay it; they very properly decline to believe that two and two make anything but four, however insistent some one else may be that the real total is five. Mr. Chamberlain has the assistance of two *ad hoc* organisations, the Imperial Tariff Committee which covers the Birmingham district, and the Tariff Reform League, which seeks to hustle the rest of the country into Protection. Nothing has done more to expose the true character of the movement than the setting up of the Tariff Commission. The spectacle of a number of gentlemen meeting to decide what tariff would best suit their own pockets has struck the popular imagination in a very different way from what was intended or expected.

The device of inquiry being no longer available, something else had to be invented for the present Session, and it has been found in the declaration that the Government is opposed at present to a tax on food, and will only ask at the next General Election for freedom of negotiation. This, too, has had its measure of success, not indeed in disguising the true state of the facts, but in prolonging the life of the Ministry. Its real character was illustrated clearly enough by the fate of the amendment put down by Mr. Wharton. In the debate on the amendment on the Address, Mr. Akers-Douglas, speaking (in Mr. Balfour's absence) as leader of the House, stated that the Government was "not in favour of Protection" and did "not intend to advocate it"; and that the Government policy did not include either the "taxation of food" or the "question of Colonial preference." Accordingly, when Mr. Pirie put down early in March a motion condemning the fiscal policy of the Government, Mr. Wharton, with the consent of the Prime Minister and the Government officials, put down an amendment asking the House to "approve the explicit declarations of his Majesty's Ministers that their policy of fiscal reform does not include either a general system of Protection or preference based on the taxation of food." But this at once led to a revolt of the Chamberlainites. They met to the number of 110, and resolved not to support the amendment, the withdrawal of which they demanded as the price of their support of the Government.

Naturally the price was paid, and the Government remained in office. In the incisive words of Mr. Winston Churchill, "When Mr. Balfour had the power to combat Protection, he had not the will; now that he has the will, he has no longer the power."

The attitude taken up by the Federation, and by the whole Liberal party, on the merits of fiscal policy has been made clear both in the resolutions passed at the three meetings of the General Committee, and in the manifesto last October, all of them set out elsewhere. There is no need here to insist upon the inestimable blessings which the adoption of Free Trade has brought to this country, or upon the incalculable dangers which would be run by any abandonment of it as the declared fiscal policy of the United Kingdom. It is impossible to believe that the people of this country will give heed to the Troglodytes and Shibboleth-lovers who seek to persuade them to take up the discarded and discredited policy of Protection. The case for Free Trade rests not on what Peel, Cobden, and Bright thought or said, great as their authority is, but on the experience which we have of the benefits of Free Trade and the evidence we see elsewhere of the drawbacks of Protection. In safe-guarding a precious heritage from the past, Liberals welcome men of all parties who are not willing to abandon their opinions at the bidding of Mr. Chamberlain. The fight will doubtless be sharp and severe, it may very possibly be prolonged, but with a continuance of hearty co-operation between Free-traders of all parties and no party, the certainty of victory can never be imperilled. All that is needed is that there shall be no over-confidence, but that every fighter in the cause of Free Trade shall stand to his arms until victory is beyond question assured.

THE GOVERNMENT RECORD.

Despite all their efforts to shirk an Inquiry into the war the Government were compelled to redeem their promise on the subject, and had the supreme humiliation of being found guilty of unpreparedness, neglect, miscalculation, inefficiency, and incapacity. Lord Salisbury, in the House of Lords early in 1901, said frankly (as was his wont) that "the Government had never been in favour of inquiry," that it was not "desirable to know who was to blame," he would

"rather leave that buried in obscurity." That was an attitude which was easily intelligible when last August Lord Elgin's Commission presented their Report and published the Evidence upon which it was based. The result not only justified the action of the Liberal party in insisting upon an inquiry into the conduct of the war, but more than justified the severest criticisms which had been passed upon Ministers for their incapacity, both political and military. The key to the whole matter has since been revealed in another connection. The calculation of Mr. Chamberlain and his colleagues was that the Boers would not fight; in the words he used to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman (words which, if he does not remember, he does not deny), it was all a "game of bluff." It is only too clear from the Report that all the Government proceeded on that assumption. Only a month before the war, Sir Redvers Buller, already selected to command in South Africa in case of war, actually had to write an urgent letter to Lord Salisbury to insist upon the elementary truth that "the diplomatic authorities should consult with the military authorities." Mr. Balfour, who was amazed, when war actually came, at the Orange Free State throwing in its lot with the Transvaal, was repeatedly by the Intelligence Department warned in June and August, 1899, that war with the one State would certainly involve war with the other. Lord Esher, one of the Commissioners, reported that our condition of military unpreparedness in 1899 before the war showed that Lord Lansdowne was "culpable of neglect" or "in ignorance of the facts." Mr. Chamberlain, who now pretends that the conduct of the Opposition balked his diplomacy, told Lord Lansdowne, on August 18th, 1899, that he saw "no occasion for reinforcements," and eight days later made the minatory speech in which he talked of the squeezed sponge and the hour-glass. The warnings of Sir William Butler, who more than any man foresaw the real nature of the conflict, were disregarded and their author recalled to England. Summarily, the whole operation was a gamble with the safety of the Empire, risking its existence and involving us in a deplorable loss of life and treasure. The *Standard* expressed no more than the bare truth when it declared that "our lack of preparation and the faults of our system were mainly responsible for the colossal expenditure, the deplorable delay, and the heavy sacrifice."

The miscalculation and muddle did not end with the diplomacy that preceded the war. When war came we were not only unready for that particular war, but for any war. At the time we were assured that, apart from the merits of our quarrel with the Boers, no fault could be found with the way in which on our side it was being conducted. "I do not believe," Mr. Balfour boasted in the early days of 1900, "it will ever be maintained that the army we have sent into the field was inadequately equipped with any modern requirement, or any equipment which the progress of invention has shown to be necessary to a modern army." It is only necessary to read the Report and the Evidence to show how little the facts correspond to this fancy picture of ideal equipment. No one expects a war to be conducted without mistakes, but the deficiencies which hampered the efforts of our soldiers were absolutely inexcusable, the more particularly as the Unionist party has always made it part of their case that the defence of the Empire can safely be entrusted to their hands, and to theirs alone. The country now realises that no war could have been worse conducted than the South African, and that its proportions both as to time and cost are largely due to the *laches* of Ministers, now found guilty by a tribunal of their own choosing.

Mr. Balfour recognised the gravity of the situation created by the Report of Lord Elgin's Commission by appointing a Committee of Three to overhaul our military system and to make recommendations for its reform and reorganisation. This Committee, consisting of Lord Esher, Sir John Fisher and Sir George S. Clarke, has done its work with remarkable promptitude, and has recommended a large number of far-reaching and fundamental changes, both as to the Cabinet Committee of Defence presided over by the Prime Minister, and as to the War Office, henceforward to be in charge of an Army Council comparable to the Board of Admiralty. It remains to be seen what the Government will do as to accepting these recommendations. As it is, whilst the Army Council has been created, the Army Estimates have been framed on the old model, and it is not known how much or how little will be done in the way of reform. The Army Corps scheme is abandoned, and the action of the Liberal party in opposing it finds abundant justification in the report of the

Committee. Liberals heartily welcome the prospect of greater efficiency in military administration, though they probably do not agree with the Committee in the low estimate they entertain for the part which civilians can properly play in such administration.

There is the usual tale of "little wars," some of them not so very little either. We have had another year's fighting in Somaliland, at enormous expense and for objects which it would pass the wit of man to discover. Indeed, even the Government has now decided to discontinue operations that have been as costly as inconclusive. In Tibet, Lord Curzon has unhappily departed from the sound and, unadventurous frontier policy which he has hitherto pursued greatly to the advantage of the revenues and security of India. As might have been anticipated, the "mission with an escort" has had to fight, and, except to evade a plain Act of Parliament, seems undistinguishable from an expedition for which the consent of Parliament would have been necessary. It is imperative that a check should, without delay, be put upon the spirit of aggression which so constantly lands us in unnecessary expeditions, leading, as they nearly always do, to deplorable bloodshed and waste of money.

The Irish Land Act was safely placed last year upon the Statute Book—admittedly a large experiment, and only worth its great cost if it really leads to agrarian peace, as all parties hope that it may. It is ominous that an amending Bill is already necessary, but it is too early yet to predict what the effect of the whole scheme is likely to be. Such dangers as exist are not likely to arise yet, but we are still convinced that a central Irish authority of some nature will be found necessary before many years have passed. That authority may not be a Parliament in Dublin, but if it has extensive powers as to Irish land, it may well be the first step towards the local government of Ireland by the Irish people themselves.

CHINESE LABOUR.

The end of what Mr. Chamberlain declared was a "miners' war" is the "indenturing" under contract for three years of Chinamen, who are only to be allowed to work in the mines, and, at the end of their contract must go back to their native country.

Once again the Rand capitalists have won, for they have frankly explained why it is that they are unwilling to have the mines worked by white men. All sorts of reasons are given to prove that this is impossible, but the mine-owners themselves have told us the real reason why, since there is a shortage of black labour, they prefer yellow to white. Their fear is that "if a large number of white men are employed on the Rand the same troubles will arise as are now prevalent in the Australian Colonies, i.e., that the combination of the labouring classes will become so strong as to be able to more or less dictate, not only on questions of wages but also on political questions, by the power of their votes when a representative Government is established." So the fears of the mine-owners are to be assuaged by the importation of Chinese "helots," who are not only to be without political rights, but to have none of the freedom which we are accustomed to regard as inseparably associated with British rule.

In justification of this abrogation of the principle of freedom, it is alleged that the British Government merely refrains from disallowing an Ordinance asked for by the white population of the Transvaal. But however consolatory this plea may be to an Archbishop, it is little reassuring to anyone who remembers the persistent refusal of the Transvaal Executive and Lord Milner to permit a referendum, in which the Transvaal should speak for itself. Instead of that, which would have satisfied the opponents of Chinese Labour in the Transvaal, since it is precisely what they asked for in vain, the situation has been carefully engineered so as to persuade the Mother Country that in asking for the Chinaman the mine-owners represent the people of the Colony. Lord Milner, indeed, in refusing a referendum had the hardihood to say that the Transvaal was a "free country with a free Press"—the truth being that it is a country in which a voteless people are governed by a nominated and unrepresentative Legislative Council, whilst its Press is one that has been deliberately freed of all the editors (the most distinguished journalists it possessed) who were against Chinese labour. It is idle to pretend, therefore, that the responsibility in this matter is not one which has to be borne by the people of this country. Their feeling has been outraged by the course taken by the Government in not disallowing an Ordinance which has

only to be read to show that the conditions under which Chinamen are to be imported, if not those of actual slavery, are, at all events, inconsistent with freedom. Hitherto the Imperial Government has always done its best to insist that there shall be neither slavery nor anything like it in South Africa. Not content with the words of the Sand River Convention of 1852 which prohibited the Boers from treating their Kaffirs as slaves, words were actually introduced into the London Convention of 1884 which in addition forbade "apprenticeship partaking of slavery." After language could not be found to characterise what is now permitted by the Chinese Ordinance. It is pitiable to notice the cant which has been used in order to recommend what is *per se* so detestable. The Colonial Secretary dilates on the amelioration of the lot of the Chinaman which will be achieved by exchanging Chinese poverty for prosperity on the Rand—an argument possibly for free importation, but an argument against a policy which ties the Chinaman to the mine, permits him no alternative occupation, and bundles him out of South Africa as soon as his period of indenture is done. Other apologists remind us of the unequalled opportunities which will arise of Christianising the Chinaman—a plea that needs only to be stated to carry with it its own refutation. Nor should it be overlooked that the decision of the Imperial Government is one which deeply offends the sentiment of the Colonies who did so much to help us in the war, and who were definitely and explicitly given by Mr. Chamberlain a voice in what the settlement is to be. Mr. Lyttelton's notion of consolidating the Empire, however, is to tell the protesting Colonies that the path of "wisdom" is for them to hold their tongues!

Liberalism has always set its face against racial prejudice and feeling, and it is of the first importance to note that it is not hostility to the Chinaman as such which has inspired the Liberal party to take the strong line that it has taken in opposing this Transvaal Ordinance. The two points are, first, that there is not sufficient evidence that the introduction of the Chinaman is justified either by the necessities of the case or by the public opinion of the Transvaal; and, secondly, that if the Chinaman is to be imported, it is intolerable that his condition should be one "partaking of slavery."

FINANCE.

The Budget brings into clear relief the deplorable state into which nine years of Tory administration have brought the finances of the country. Not only is there no reduction of taxation but a large increase, although the War is over and only normal expenditure has now to be met out of current revenue. With the new taxation now imposed the entire annual burden amounts to 25 millions more than in 1899. The War is over: almost all the taxation imposed during the War remains. No one can now fail to understand that the price of Toryism is an extra fourpence on the Income Tax, an extra fourpence a pound on tea, a halfpenny a pound on sugar, an extra shilling per barrel on beer, an extra sixpence per gallon on spirits, a shilling per ton on exported coal, and extra taxation on tobacco. In ten years the annual expenditure has gone up from 94 to 143 millions—an increase of more than one half, and equivalent to £1 3s. 4d. for every man, woman and child in the United Kingdom. This increase is as alarming as it is unnecessary; it is due to the wasteful and profligate methods of Tory Ministers, who make no attempt of any sort to cut the garment according to the cloth. In particular the amount spent on armaments is out of all proportion either to national necessities or to what the nation gets in return. The fact that after a year in which 139 millions was raised in taxes for Imperial purposes the Chancellor of the Exchequer is faced with a past realised deficit of $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions and a prospective deficit of 4 millions speaks for itself. As to the $5\frac{1}{2}$ millions, in so far as he finds the money for it he does so by appropriating funds which should have gone to the reduction of the National Debt—that is to say, he meets it out of capital instead of income. As to the future deficit, the bulk of the money is to be raised by an extra penny on the Income Tax and by a further addition to the tax on tea, raising it to 8d. per pound. However unpleasant an income-tax of a shilling may be it is hardly to be avoided so long as money is spent in the present lavish fashion. The extra tax on tea is quite indefensible. It perpetuates the injustice done last year to the indirect taxpayer, whilst it is a tax which will press hardly on the poorest classes of the community. Summarily the whole position cannot better

be described than it has been by Sir Edgar Vincent, a Conservative who is beyond question an expert financier :—

“The financial position of the country is worse than it has been at any time during the last fifty years. Expenditure is admittedly out of hand; national credit is lower than at any moment during the last twenty years, and relatively to the credit of other nations, is lower than at any period during the last fifty years.”

If there were no other reasons, finance in itself would furnish an overwhelming case for the replacement of the present Government by one pledged to a prudent and economical stewardship of the country's resources.

In connection with finance it should be put on record that a notable step forward in local taxation has been taken by the reading a second time of the Bill introduced by Mr. Trevelyan for the separate assessment and special taxation of site values. This is the third measure on the subject upon which the House of Commons has voted in three successive years, and though the measures are not in all respects identical it is none the less significant that the adverse majorities of 71 and 13 in 1902 and 1903 should in 1904 become a favourable majority of 67. The Government were this year afraid to oppose the Bill as a Government, though all the Ministers except one taking part in the Division voted against it, and the approval of the principle of the taxation of ground values by a Tory House of Commons sufficiently indicates the great progress made by the movement in favour of Land Reform which shall at once help to shift the burden of rating on to the proper shoulders, and in so doing assist to solve such problems as the housing question by setting free the land for the greater benefit of the community as a whole.

THE SITUATION AND OUTLOOK.

After much hesitation and delay the Government have produced the Licensing Bill, to which they were committed in consequence of Mr. Balfour's remarkable attack last year upon the magistrates. It is a measure which must be resisted in the interests of true Temperance reform. Nothing is done to make the licensing authority representative, whilst the power to refuse the renewal of licences is

taken away from the local magistrates, who can best judge of the needs of the locality, and given to the magistrates at Quarter Sessions. The proposals for compensation are intended to create what has never existed before—a vested interest for the licensee in the licence, which under existing law he gets for one year and for one year only. Mr. Akers-Douglas, indeed, sounded the note of the whole measure in speaking of one of its clauses as a “special safeguard to the trade.” Because it is framed in this spirit, and not in the interests of the community as a whole, it is that the Liberal party will give the Bill its strenuous opposition.

Although alien immigration was represented in Unionist Election Addresses of 1895 as an urgent social question, it is not until 1904 that the Unionist Government has introduced a Bill on the subject. It is not too much to say that this delay indicates that the subject is one of “political” rather than “economic” urgency, to quote Mr. Chamberlain’s admission made in connection with the very similar subject of the exclusion of prison-made goods. The Bill now introduced proposes to arm the Executive with power to exclude undesirables, and the question turns upon the definition of that term. As defined in the Bill the word is used very widely, and there is a real danger that the right of asylum for political refugees would be imperilled—a lamentable prospect for all who take pride in our past national record in this matter. In any case, if the Bill becomes law and excludes only the alien who can fairly be deemed undesirable, it is certain that the amount of employment gained as a consequence by the native working man will be infinitesimal. Such support as the measure receives arises from the desire for employment, but the Home Secretary states in the clearest possible way that a great portion of the alien population are “most loyal, industrious, and law-abiding citizens.” So far as material benefit is concerned it may be confidently predicted that the Bill, if it becomes law, will prove yet another dose of the quack medicine which is so constantly recommended as a certain recipe for national prosperity.

The future of South Africa is still a very serious problem, needing more wisdom in its solution than it is likely to get from His Majesty’s present advisers. Reference has been made elsewhere to the action of the Government in the matter of Chinese Labour, and what has happened

in that connection points very strongly to the desirability of the grant at the earliest possible date of representative institutions, without which the political settlement of the two new Colonies can hardly be said to have begun. Lord Milner's intolerance of the opinions of people who live six or seven thousand miles away suggests, at any rate, that the desire of the inhabitants in those Colonies to govern themselves is not wholly unreasonable. If it be said that the time has not yet come for representative institutions, steady preparation should at least be made for them, though all that the Government seems to have done is to decide that the present army of occupation is to be of a permanent character. The very fact, moreover, that the ultimate responsibility of admitting Chinese labour has rested with the home Government, emphasises the inconvenience and perils of the present situation. It is adding unduly to the burden of Empire when we have to make a decision which (as in all the other great Colonies) ought to rest with the Colonists themselves.

This year, as last, the Agenda for the Council Meeting does not contain any general resolution dealing with Liberal principles as a whole. This course has been taken solely to allow of more time for the detailed consideration of resolutions concerned with pressing issues and specific subjects of reform, and the Committee desire, in this Report, to put on record the continued adherence of the Federation to all the points of Liberal policy for which it has contended. These, indeed, are times when almost every day brings with it fresh proof of the need of the application of Liberal principles, whether in administration or legislation. It is a solid satisfaction that after anxious and difficult years of opposition the Liberal party is united, in good heart, and resolutely determined to put an end to the long period of Tory misgovernment from which the country has suffered, with one short interval, since 1886. The thanks of the party are due to their Parliamentary leaders, Lord Spencer and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, for the sturdy and unflinching way in which they have advocated Liberal principles, as well as to their colleagues on the Front Benches, notably Mr. Asquith, who has been indefatigable and unanswerable in his exposure of Mr. Chamberlain and in defence of Free Trade. Liberals welcome, too, the powerful support in the same cause of many influential Unionists, and in par-

ticular of the Duke of Devonshire. It has not been an easy thing for many Unionist Free-traders to take a line which has brought them into conflict with their party, but the courage and public spirit they have shown are welcome evidences of a high standard of political morality.

Mr. Balfour, however, in the meantime clings to office with a persistency which would be commendable if we did not know the low opinion he entertains of a Government which persists in going on when it has clearly forfeited the respect and confidence of the country. In 1895 he had something to say on that point by way of criticism of the Liberal Government, and every word of the contemptuous indictment he then uttered applies to-day, but with tenfold force, to his own Ministry. The by-elections leave no room for doubt that a General Election would place the Unionist party in a hopeless minority. Indeed, so far from that being disputed, it is actually alleged in some quarters as an excuse for the continuance of the present Government. It is argued that "patriotic suicide" (as recommended once by Lord Salisbury to the London County Council) is not a policy which Ministers can reasonably be asked to adopt. The longer, however, they retain the office to which they must know they are no longer entitled, the greater will be the retribution which will await them when the day of reckoning comes, as ultimately it must. For that day we are glad to know that the Liberal party has never been so well prepared. But it is essential that this state of readiness and organisation should be maintained, and that nothing should be left to chance when the polling day comes. It is no mere form of words to say that the next General Election is fraught with great issues. The maintenance of Free Trade as our national fiscal policy, the amendment of our educational system, the resettlement of our national finance so as to reduce the present wasteful and extravagant rate of expenditure, the solution of the more pressing of our social problems—these are some of the issues upon which the verdict of the country will be taken. Nothing need be said here to emphasise the importance of a right decision being given ; no Liberal is worth the glorious name he bears if he is not prepared to fight unflinchingly for the overthrow of Tory domination. Not, indeed, that the task of a Liberal Government can

be either easy or agreeable. The national estate has for too long been in negligent and improvident hands ; it will need much patience and arduous labour to put its affairs once again on a satisfactory footing. But the task, if difficult, is one that can only be accomplished by the Liberal party, and, confident in the strength and efficacy of Liberal principles, Liberals look forward to their triumph as soon as the present discredited and disunited Ministry submits itself to the judgment of the constituencies.

NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION.

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS.

Dr. Cr.
FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31st, 1903.

RECEIPTS.		PAYMENTS.	
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
To Cash at Bankers, Jan. 1st, 1903	260 10 5	By Salaries and Wages, and Fees of Agents and Organisers	1,714 1 4
" Cash in hands of Secretaries	150 0 0	" Registration, Organisation, and Travelling Expenses	162 18 10
" Subscriptions and Donations and Grants from Special Fund.....	3,619 16 5	" Printing, Stationery, Newspapers, &c., and Pamphlets, Leaflets and Grants of Literature per Liberal Publication Department	638 13 8
		" Public Meetings, Lectures, Deputations, Conferences and Annual and other Meetings of the Federation	416 11 0
		" Rent, Coals and Lighting	282 14 0
		" Postages and Telegrams	228 8 1
		" Office Furniture and Plant s/c	19 8 0
		" Office and Incidental Expenses	166 3 6
			3,628 18 5
		" Cash at Bankers, Dec. 31st, 1903 ...	251 8 5
		" Cash in hands of Secretaries	150 0 0
			401 8 5
			<u>£4,030 6 10</u>

Examined, and found correct,

(Signed) C. C. SMITH & RICHARDS,

Chartered Accountants,

CODDEN CHAMBERS, CORPORATION STREET,
BIRMINGHAM.
February 8th, 1904.

(Signed) JOHN MASSIE, Treasurer.

NOTE.—The above Balance-Sheet relates only to the General Working Account of the National Liberal Federation. The Finance Committee will prepare a statement in respect of the National Liberal Campaign Fund when that Fund has been closed and administered.

PROCEEDINGS
AT THE
TWENTY-SIXTH
ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE
NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION
HELD AT MANCHESTER,
ON
MAY 12TH, 13TH, AND 14TH, 1904.

Most of the speeches here recorded (including Mr. Morley's) have been specially revised by the speakers mainly from the excellent reports of the "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN."

PROCEEDINGS
AT THE
TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE
NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION,
HELD AT MANCHESTER,
MAY 12TH AND 13TH, 1904.

FIRST SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

THURSDAY, MAY 12TH.

The first Session of the Council was held in the Midland Hall at two o'clock. Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C. (President of the Federation), occupied the Chair.

Among those who were present at one or more of the meetings were the following :—

The Right Hon. John Morley, M.P., the Right Hon. Herbert J. Gladstone, M.P., Sir John T. Brunner, Bart., M.P., Mr. J. Emmott Barlow, M.P. (President, Manchester Reform Club), Mr. Winston L. S. Churchill, M.P., Mr. F. Cawley, M.P., Mr. Charles Fenwick, M.P., Mr. Ellis J. Griffith, M.P., Mr. N. W. Helme, M.P., Mr. L. V. Harcourt, M.P., Sir W. H. Holland, M.P., Sir Joseph Leigh, M.P., Mr. Reginald McKenna, M.P., Mr. J. Compton Rickett, M.P., Mr. F. S. Stevenson, M.P., Mr. C. E. Schwann, M.P. (President of the Manchester Liberal Federation), and Mrs. Schwann, Mr. C. P. Scott, M.P., Mr. George Toulmin, M.P., Mr. T. P. Whittaker, M.P., the following officers and members of the Executive Committee of the National Liberal Federation: Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C. (President), Mr. Edward Evans, jun. (Chairman of Committee), Dr. John Massie (Treasurer), Mr. F. D. Acland, Mr. E. T. Ann, Mr. Alfred Barran, Mr. Robert Bird, Mr. J. F. L. Brunner, Mr. P. W. Bunting, Mr. A. H. Burgess, Mr. W. Howell Davies, Mr. Hugh Fullerton, Mr. Percy H. Illingworth, Mr. Charles H. Radford, Mr. Arnold S. Rowntree, Mr. J. E. Willans, Mr. Frank Wright, Mr. Robert A. Hudson (Secretary), and Mr. Frank Barter (Assistant Secretary), Mr. Charles Geake (Secretary of the Liberal Publication Department), Mr. W. M. Crook (Secretary of the Home Counties Liberal Federation), Mr. John Clarke (Assistant-Secretary of the Home Counties Liberal Federation), Mr. J. Renwick Seager (Liberal Central Association), Mr. J. O. Andrews, Mr. J. H. Anderson, Mr. T. C. Beeley, Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Byles, Mr. W. Phipson Beale, K.C., Mr. J. J. Brigg.

Mr. Hilaire Belloc, Mr. Richard Barlow (Chairman of Committee of the National Reform Union), Mr. Arthur G. Symonds (Secretary of the National Reform Union), Mr. W. H. Cowan, Mr. John Clough, Mr. W. H. Chadwick, Mr. James Duckworth, Mr. Timothy Davies, Mr. Thomas R. Ferens, Mr. John Fell, Mr. A. Grant, Mr. Hamar Greenwood, Sir Robert H. Hobart, K.C.V.O., Mr. Thomas S. Hague, Mr. F. G. Hindle, Mr. T. G. Horridge, K.C., Mr. Richard D. Holt, Mr. W. H. Bateman Hope, Mr. J. Johnstone Haye, Colonel Ivor Herbert, C.B., C.M.G., Mr. John S. Higham, the Hon. Geoffrey Howard, Mr. Arthur A. Haworth, Mr. T. H. W. Idris, Mr. James Lawrence, Mr. R. A. Lister, Mr. Arnold Lupton, Mr. Ernest H. Lamb, Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Lennard, the Rev. Thomas Law, Mr. A. J. Mundella, Mr. Fred Maddison, Mr. H. G. Montgomery, Mr. A. E. W. Mason, Mr. Alfred Mond, Mr. Harry Nuttall, Mr. and Mrs. W. E. B. Priestley, Mr. Charles Roberts, Mr. J. M. Robertson, Mr. James Rowlands, Mr. A. H. Scott, Mr. W. Lang Todd (Hon. Secretary of the Scottish Liberal Association—Eastern Section), Mr. Henry Vivian, Mr. Allen Upward, Mr. James Wicks, Mr. A. D. Wood (Secretary of Scottish Liberal Association—Western Section), Mr. Henry de R. Walker, and, in addition to the President, the following officers of the Manchester Liberal Federation: Mr. William Royle (Chairman), Mr. Walter Butterworth (Hon. Secretary), Mr. Fred Burn (Secretary), Mr. Councillor Thewlis (Chairman of the local Reception Committee), Mr. Zimmerman, and Mr. Elvaston. With less than a dozen exceptions every constituency in England and Wales was represented at the Sessions of the Federation Council. The total number of delegates nominated by the affiliated Liberal Associations was 3,545 (by far the largest number appointed since the memorable meetings in Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1891 when Mr. Gladstone was present). The percentage of delegates in actual attendance was also unusually high.

The Adoption of the Report.

Mr. Birrell's Presidential Address.

THE PRESIDENT (Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C.) moved that the report and statement of accounts be received and adopted. His first duty, he said, was to congratulate the Federation on having the largest meeting that had ever been held since 1891, when it met at Newcastle. They would agree with him that obviously there must be some reason for their large attendance, some reason for their good spirits. He wondered what that was. Let them consider for a moment the present position of His Majesty's Government. It would require the pen of a Pascal to describe the irony of that position; it would tax all the powers of Dean Swift to express its ignominy. By common consent of politicians of every description the present Administration would not reappear after the next general election. Lord Byron once said he hated most people and disliked the rest; and of Mr. Balfour's Administration it might be truthfully said that those who did not hate it cordially disliked it, and between the hatred and the cordial dislike it must disappear on the first opportunity. And here they got face to face. When would that opportunity be afforded? Were a general election actually to take place to-morrow what a Black Friday it would be for the Tory party—if, indeed, that is the name by which they should

describe the present amalgamation of Foodtaxers, convinced and half-convinced. Were that general election to take place to-morrow, Mr. Balfour's Administration would, undoubtedly, be succeeded by a strong Liberal Government. But the general election was to be postponed for six months or for twelve months, if our constitution allowed, in the hope—the Micawber-like hope—that something would turn up which, instead of making their successors strong, would make them weak, dependent upon the Irish vote, and therefore peculiarly liable to suffer from those Parliamentary intrigues with which the Tory party are not wholly unacquainted. Such was patriotism, such was party government, in the time of Mr. A. J. Balfour. That was a policy which might excite, as he knew it had excited, the admiration of some, but there was one sensation it could never inspire, and that was the respect of honest men. In the meantime, Liberals must have patience to work and patience to wait. Our Constitution was by no means perfect; everybody knew that; and he had often quoted the powerful criticism of Rousseau when he said Englishmen boasted of their freedom, but as a matter of fact they were only free once every seven years, for three weeks. The last time the English people enjoyed this freedom they were befooled. They were told not to vote as mere partisans; they were invited to vote as patriots. Nonconformists, temperance men, the advocates of free labour, were all assured that if they could rise above party for once, and give a patriot's vote no harm would befall them. Too many of them listened to that insidious and false appeal. What was their reward? The Education Act, the Licensing Bill, Chinese labour imported into South Africa because it was believed to be cheap, and because it would not be allowed a vote. Well, when they next enjoyed this period of freedom would they not have an old score to wipe off? What would be the issue at that election? Ministers of the Crown were often as conceited as they were incapable, and it was a pet delusion of Prime Ministers that they could dictate to the electors of this country what people were to think about and what to vote upon during their three weeks' freedom. They could do nothing of the kind. The most they could do was to seek to falsify issues and to confuse men's minds, and of Mr. Balfour's skill in both these directions he had the highest opinion. But when the election came, no address the Prime Minister might concoct to his constituents here in Manchester, no pamphlet he might publish, no dust he might throw, no situation he might contrive would prevent the electors whom he deceived in 1900 from paying him out, and turning him out. Was Free Trade to be the issue? This depended upon Mr. Chamberlain. Some astute politicians assured him that there was no longer any fight in that once famous "bruiser," and that the "greatest Colonial Secretary the world had ever known" would be content to pass the residue of his Parliamentary days in applauding the periods and laughing at the repartees of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. How dreary a fate! What a sombre close for an exciting life! He thought Mr. Chamberlain would fight on to the end, though on which side and for what cause it would be rash to

predict. It was a notable circumstance that the Prime Minister, the new Grand Master of the Primrose League—the distinctions that awaited politicians in this country were indeed amazing—in his annual address to that distinguished body had accomplished two feats. First of all, he never mentioned the name of Lord Beaconsfield, in whose honour the League was founded. In that, however, he was bound to say he only closely followed the example of his predecessor, Lord Salisbury—that master of flouts and jeers. Not only did he omit to mention the name of the founder of the Primrose League, the name of its inspired genius, but he also forgot to mention the fiscal question. And yet—mark the irony of the situation!—he knew perfectly well that nine out of ten whom he was addressing were Protectionists to the backbone, and that, had they been put at that moment to their election and compelled to express their party allegiance, they would one and all have exclaimed, “Not this man, but Joseph Chamberlain.” If Free Trade was to be the issue at the next general election Liberals were ready to fight it, and they were well persuaded by all the signs and tokens that they could gather together that they would win. But whether they won or whether they lost on that issue they would fight it for ever, for it was impossible to imagine—he asked any of his hearers whether he or she could imagine—a Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer, a member of a Liberal Ministry, bringing in a Protectionist Budget. “That issue,” Mr. Birrell said, “will find us ready. And there are others—religious equality and all that religious equality involves in Church, in State, in education; free labour and all that free labour involves at home and abroad; honest finance, no taxes on tea, retrenchment of an annual expenditure of 154 millions sterling, the sobriety of the people, and not the enrichment of the drink trade. These are some of the issues which will engage our attention. But, in conclusion, and in reality, the issue is a single one. It is this—Is England during the twentieth century going to be Liberal or going to be Tory? Is it to move forward, or is it to go backward? During the last ten or twelve years we have gone, and are invited to go, steadily back—back to Protection, back to Church rates, back to servile labour in our colonies. Gentlemen, we cannot, we must not, and we will not afford to do that. We are asked to look forward, we and our children, to a future in which no true Liberal could breathe, a future of Imperialism, of Cæsarism, of Empire, of expansion abroad in places where no white man can live, of military conscription at home, of false ideals of national greatness and of national honour. This false Imperialism is a new kind of religion of a most bastard order, vulgar in its conception, dangerous in its growth, destructive of the love of liberty, scornful of the just claims of other races, indifferent to bloodshed. It is fatal to real manhood and to virtue, and can only end in financial ruin, political corruption, decay and death. It is against these false conceptions of England’s duty and of England’s destiny that we shall fight at the next general election, and I am sure I am only within my right when I call upon you and each one of you in your place and station to do your best in the coming contest to secure a great

and a glorious victory for the principles which are dear to us as our own lives."

MR. ROBERT BIRD (Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Federation), in seconding the motion, said he considered it hardly creditable that a great organisation like the National Liberal Federation could not provide a sum of £50,000 ; still more if there were a difficulty in raising the balance asked for of £18,000. They were going to get that, he hoped, with the co-operation of all the delegates present. The Committee were impressed with the fact that, whilst so many wealthy supporters of the Liberal cause subscribed handsomely, something more should come from the rank and file. No price they could pay would be too great for the turning out of this corrupt and discredited Government. He hoped there would be a correspondence between the enthusiasm and the sacrifice they were prepared to make, for it was of no use proclaiming their loyalty to Liberal principles unless they were prepared to make some sacrifice for them.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

A WOMAN DELEGATE in the body of the hall desired to know the attitude of the Federation towards woman suffrage.

THE PRESIDENT said it devolved upon him, as President, to answer that very pertinent and proper question. By the constitution of the Federation it was the duty of the Executive Committee, at its annual meeting, to invite from the federated associations resolutions for consideration. At that meeting amendments could be moved and the sense of the members could be properly ascertained. The object was to enable the Executive to find out what were the political questions upon which the Liberal party, as a whole, was practically united. Having ascertained this, resolutions were framed for the general meeting of the Council about which they were satisfied no real difference of opinion existed. The most important question of woman suffrage had twice been discussed at the General Committee meeting, and on two occasions a vote had been taken. Both times a resolution in favor of woman suffrage had been carried, but not by a majority so large as to justify them in making it the subject matter of a resolution at the General Council meeting. But it had got very near, and he personally had no doubt that before long it would be found possible to submit a resolution on the subject to the Council. Speaking, again personally, he might say the sooner that good time came the better, but at present they would be departing both from the letter and from the spirit of their written constitution if they assumed that there was a sufficient consensus of Liberal opinion to justify the Executive in placing woman suffrage on the agenda. The time to fight it was not there, but at the General Committee meeting, at which amendments could be moved. ✓

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Election of President and Treasurer.

MR. C. E. SCHWANN, M.P. (President of the Manchester Liberal Federation), moved :—

“That Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C., be re-elected President, and Dr. John Massie be re-elected Treasurer for the ensuing year.”

In extending a welcome to members of the Federation to Manchester, Mr. Schwann said Lancashire scarcely deserved the great compliment paid to it by the Liberal Federation coming to Manchester, because he was sorry to say Liberal representation in Lancashire, as a whole, was not in the condition that they would like. At the same time they knew that it was going to be improved. There was something magnetic in the air which was fast dispelling all doubt and depression, and the almost despair which filled their hearts a year ago. He was perfectly persuaded that when the general election came Lancashire would do its duty. All around we find that the omens are favourable. In Scotland the Liberals would gain a great number of votes. In Lancashire they would gain a great number, and the same remark would apply to Yorkshire. He did not think they could hope for many more seats from brave little Wales, but he had no doubt that she would give the go-by to the one or two Tory representatives she still possessed. The West of England was becoming almost a Liberal stronghold, and so were the Eastern counties. They heard good reports from the Southern and home counties. There was always a rather weak spot in the Midlands in the neighbourhood of Birmingham, and he supposed it would require a year or two more in order to break up the fetish of the Birmingham people. But it seemed very likely they would see the fall of that great idol. In London we may expect some gains, perhaps not so considerable as we could wish. Everybody present would like an election to come within a month. At the same time he had found in a long life that very often things he thought were a great misfortune turned out to be blessings in disguise, and he was not sure whether, if the election were put off for a year, they would not gain as a party. Was any Nonconformist going to forget the Education Act? Were those interested in temperance going to forget the iniquitous Licensing Bill before the House of Commons? Did they believe that those who objected to the war in South Africa, those who objected to pay a shilling Income-tax, and the ladies who had to pay twopence more in the pound on their tea, were likely to forget these things within a year? He believed, therefore, that their position would be quite as favourable half a year or a year hence as it would be if they rushed an election next month. Manchester had a tender regard for Mr. Birrell, who sacrificed himself with a heroism he had never seen equalled in the Liberal party. He left a safe seat in Scotland to fight one of the constituencies of Manchester, because he knew he could do better service for the party there. Manchester and the Liberal party honoured him for his gallant action.

MR. J. EMMOTT BARLOW, M.P. (Chairman of the Manchester Reform Club), seconded the motion. At the next election, he said, Mr. Birrell was going to fight in that part of the country with which he was himself politically associated. He hoped the West of England might be able to go one better than Manchester were able to go on the last occasion. They looked forward with hope and confidence to the return of Mr. Birrell as one of the members for Bristol. The Tory party had always been a party of stagnation, they were prepared for it to stand still, but now it was worse than that, it had become a party of reaction and of retrogression. The Land Bill was a step backward. The Licensing Bill was also a step in the backward direction, and the same might be said of the action of the Government in the matter of education. That was a step it would be the duty of the Liberal party to retrace as soon as it got the opportunity. Then there was the question of slavery in South Africa. That was a question which appealed to the people without distinction of party. There was also the question of the normal expenditure of the country. The increase of the burdens upon the people was a retrograde step, and one fraught with most serious consequences to the national welfare and even to the national existence. In relation to all these matters there was work for the Federation to do, and no more practical head could be found to direct that work than Mr. Birrell.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

THE PRESIDENT, on his own behalf and that of Dr. Massie, thanked the Federation for their re-election, and said that they hoped to continue in office so long as they possessed the confidence of the Federation.

The Retirement of Sir William Harcourt.

THE PRESIDENT moved the adoption of the following resolution :—

“That this Council learns with deep regret of the impending withdrawal from the House of Commons of Sir William Harcourt. It places on record its grateful appreciation of the long and eminent services which he has rendered to the country, and expresses its earnest hope that he may live long to give his powerful aid towards the accomplishment of many of those reforms which he has helped so much to promote and which the Liberal party stands resolutely pledged to carry into effect.”

He said that the resolution expressed the deep-rooted conviction of every Liberal in regard to a gallant man. They rejoiced to know that, although Sir William Harcourt was retiring, his great faculties and practised pen might still be ranked among the fighting forces of the Liberal party.

MR. F. W. CAWLEY, M.P. (Lancashire—Prestwich), in seconding the resolution, said he had the advantage of sitting in the House of Commons with Sir William Harcourt for nine years, and under him for part of the time, and could therefore to some extent appreciate his

worth. When Sir William's retirement was announced it was received on all hands with expressions of great regret, not only on the Liberal side of the House of Commons but on the Conservative side, and this fact, he thought, was a testimonial of the whole House to his fairness in fighting. He had been a great fighter, dealing blows with vigour, and receiving them without flinching—quick to see and to take advantage of a weak place in his opponent's armour, he had always been equally quick to come to the rescue of a friend. But his loss to the House of Commons as distinct from party would also be great. His was the grand manner which was unfortunately fast disappearing. Like Mr. Gladstone, he had always endeavoured to uphold the prestige and dignity of the House, which gained by his entry into it, and would be the poorer by his retirement from it. Sir William Harcourt was a great party leader, a great Parliamentarian, but he was still more. From the time when he gave up his great career at the Parliamentary bar, he had stood out as the strong and fearless exponent of those principles of justice, freedom, and liberty which were the principles of Liberalism. Nor had he been content to give mere lip-service. With splendid courage he had for the public good braved the ill-will of his order, and scorned their prejudices. If anyone doubted this, let him refer to the comments of the Tory press upon the introduction of the Ground Game Bill, the Agricultural Holdings Bill, or the Bill imposing the Death Duties. In these measures he attacked the privileges of the few in the name of equity and justice, and he met and disregarded the usual vituperation and resentment of those whose privileges were curtailed. In imposing the death duties he not only did an act of justice, but he provided the country with a prolific source of revenue for which Tory Chancellors of the Exchequer had been grateful ever since. Whether as legislator or administrator, Sir William Harcourt had always shown a breadth of view which no statesman had surpassed. He had proved himself the enemy of nepotism and privilege, and the friend of freedom and justice. He had devoted a laborious and strenuous life to endeavouring to improve the conditions under which we lived. It was for them who knew and appreciated his great services, not only to record their gratitude for those services, but also their sense of the great loss their cause would sustain by the withdrawal of Sir William Harcourt from an assembly in which he had acted so brave, so useful, and so courageous a part.

The resolution was unanimously and enthusiastically adopted.

The Political Situation.

MR. H. BELLOC (prospective Liberal candidate for South Salford) moved :—

“That this Council records its hearty and unabated confidence in Lord Spencer and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and their colleagues in the two Houses of Parliament, and, being satisfied by the clear evidence of the by-elections, and other unmistakable signs, that Mr. Balfour's present Administration, far from representing the opinion of the country, has

incurred the contempt of men of all shades of political opinion, calls upon the Government to submit itself to the judgment of the constituencies at the earliest possible moment."

He said that the moment in which they attempted to get rid of the present Government would be a national moment. He pointed out that in recent years not only had our rights of combination and our system of Free Trade—both essentially English things in themselves—been threatened, but that our vague but very human sympathy with national aspirations was also in danger of being overwhelmed. Against this spirit of sympathy there had appeared the spirit called Imperialism, and this was the most un-English thing with which we had to deal. He compared the steady growth of our Colonial system during the middle part of the nineteenth century with the Imperialistic fever which drove us "forth to conquer" during the recent Tory reaction. He insisted that the national battle, when it came, must be fought on the point of patriotism. He believed that when that moment came—and unless the Government repealed the Septennial Act, it must come within eighteen months—the issue would be extremely great. At the present moment the overwhelming majority of Englishmen were opposed to special acts of this Government. But unless they organised, when the battle came mere numbers would be nothing. They wanted to organise in the sense of teaching. They must make people understand what a million pounds meant, what the money that was spent on the South African war meant, and what interference with trade would mean—especially at the present moment. If this were done, they were absolutely certain to win when the national moment came. If they won, they would have won not only for the Liberal party but also for the good name of England, and, what was more important by far and more enduring—a thing in some peril—the ancient soul, the living principle of this nation.

SIR JOHN BRUNNER, Bart., M.P. (Cheshire—Northwich), seconded the resolution. He regretted, he said, that the number of their old colleagues was now so small. It was to become smaller by the departure of one of the greatest figures amongst them. Their confidence and admiration were due to Lord Spencer, because he was a great English gentleman; their confidence and admiration were due to Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, because, not only was he a courageous leader, but also a chivalrous opponent, and one who set an example to all Britons and to Irishmen of courtesy towards opponents. Sir Henry had been falsely and foully accused of having revealed that which had been made known to him in confidence. The man who made the accusation was himself the first who made known the nature of the confidential communication. As one who desired that our political life should not be lowered—as it was now in danger of being—but raised again to the lofty level at which their great leader, Mr. Gladstone, left it, he asked the meeting, with all his heart, to pass the resolution.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Free Trade.

SIR W. H. HOLLAND, M.P. (Yorkshire—Rotherham), moved :—

“That this Council, whilst reiterating its former declarations upon the revolution in our fiscal policy proposed by Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain, recognises that the course of recent events has shown that the preservation of the country from the evils of Protection and the taxation of food depends mainly upon the determined and organised opposition of the Liberal party, and calls upon all who are alive to these dangers to join in saving the country from them.”

He was glad the resolution was to be seconded by Mr. McKenna. Mr. McKenna had figured conspicuously in the House of Commons during the past week, and he thought very honourably. No Liberal member of Parliament would dream of accusing either the Chancellor of the Exchequer or his father of having derived, or of being likely to derive, directly or indirectly, a single penny of advantage from the new tobacco duties. Mr. McKenna would certainly be one of the first to endorse that assurance. In the list of names associated with this annual meeting there was a new one—that of Mr. Winston Churchill. As Free-traders they owed a great deal to Mr. Churchill, and to Lord Hugh Cecil, Major Seely, and others for their efforts to defeat the glaring attempt which had been made to hoodwink the nation on the fiscal question. Those who wanted fiscal reform pulled wry faces and declared that the trade of the country was going to the dogs; but if they desired to show how much taxation the country was able to bear they quoted striking and undeniable statistics to demonstrate how satisfactory had been the increase of accumulated wealth. They painted the position in rosy colours. The Chancellor of the Exchequer himself the other day spoke of our shoulders being so much stronger to bear taxation, and he quoted figures to prove that during the last forty years there had been an increase of population amounting to 45 per cent., but that during the same period there had been an increase in our national wealth of 150 per cent., and an increase in our national expenditure of 125 per cent. The meeting would, he thought, agree that our national expenditure was far too great, and in the task of reducing it they must welcome the invaluable aid of the “Free-fooders;” therefore let common cause be made with them. That course was pursued, with advantage, in the Isle of Wight on a recent occasion. A skilful general adapted his defence to the kind of attack that he had to meet. Protectionist guns must be replied to by Free Trade guns, and the ammunition of Free-fooders was certainly up-to-date. “Fiscal reform” advocates had been rather quiet lately. Had Mr. Chamberlain prolonged his sojourn in Egypt the agitation might have fizzled out altogether. It was a purely one-man question. The ex-Colonial Secretary might try to galvanise it into life. If he failed, neither would his friends in the House of Commons succeed. The Prime Minister need not be expected to try, for in his late address to

the Primrose League the right hon. gentleman never once referred to it. A Liberal member (Mr. Black) had given notice of a resolution, to be moved in the House of Commons, somewhat on the lines of Mr. Wharton's. It sought to pin down the Prime Minister to the words he had used in Sheffield and elsewhere. Mr. Balfour was valiant enough when he appeared before a Sheffield audience, and when he was sure Mr. Chamberlain was not present, but in the House of Commons, when his late colleague sat within three yards of him, his courage seemed to ooze out at his fingers' ends. Mr. Chamberlain was to move an amendment to Mr. Black's resolution, with the object of pledging Mr. Balfour to some change in our fiscal system. A "change" was all he asked for; and that was at present the only point in common between Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Balfour. The moment they attempted to specify the precise kind of "change" they desired, it was seen how hopelessly conflicting and contradictory their views were. Twelve months ago Mr. Chamberlain threw down the gauntlet of fiscal reform at Birmingham. It had been eagerly taken up, and his arguments had been demolished on a thousand Liberal platforms since; so that now, unless he furnished new material during the coming week, nothing was left to Free-traders to reply to. Interest in the question had evaporated as the campaign had progressed. The last meeting of the food taxers, which was held in the Guildhall, was the least successful of the series, the reason being, he thought, that hard-headed business men were better judges of the probable effects of revolutionary fiscal changes on our trade and commerce than any politician could be. What differentiated the present agitation from that of twenty years ago was that the venue had been changed from Sheffield to Birmingham. Mr. Chamberlain had superseded Sir Howard Vincent; he had appropriated his methods and annexed his arguments, and that without a word of acknowledgment. The resolution spoke of cheap food. Their opponents said that full employment was a more necessary thing, but he, as a trader, absolutely denied that either Mr. Balfour's or Mr. Chamberlain's policy would provide fuller employment, in the aggregate, for British workmen than Free Trade. More employment there might be in some trades, but there would be far less in others. Lancashire would be worse off than it was; and surely Lancashire had been hit hard enough lately by the operation of causes altogether different. And if the best that these reformers could do would be to multiply the hardships of many of our workers, he said "Hands off! and leave us that fiscal system which has not done very badly for us on the whole during the last half century."

MR. MCKENNA, M.P. (North Monmouth), seconded the resolution. He said the kindness of their reception tempted him to refer to a recent incident in the House of Commons, though not in its personal aspects, which were of minor importance. If the Tory Whips chose to bring their supporters down to the House of Commons at an unusually early hour in order to hear the answer to a perfectly innocent question, it was their business and not that of the Opposition. Sir Henry

Campbell-Bannerman, courageous and generous as ever, was there to keep watch and ward over the flock, and the sheep intended for the sacrifice was gathered safely into the fold. He referred to the tobacco tax in its relation to the present resolution. It was a new duty of threepence on one kind of tobacco and not upon another, and was introduced avowedly for the purpose of protecting an industry, and indeed of creating a protected industry in this country, and was an illustration of what we had to expect under Protection. They were all at one in wishing to see the encouragement of industry ; but beware of an industry if it had to be encouraged by Protection. He described the conditions under which stripped and unstripped tobacco would be dealt with in the Government proposals, and the effect of those proposals upon the English manufacturer, and said his point was that this was a differential duty. If the duty of threepence were put on all kinds of tobacco he should have had nothing to say against it, and probably, on the whole, it would be a good tax. Feeling strongly as he did upon the subject the meeting would not be surprised that he used strong language about it, and that he should have spoken vehemently about the injustice of the tax. His true offence was, if offence there be, that he accused the Chancellor of the Exchequer of being ignorant of the nature of the tax. He repeated it again and again, and he ventured to think that a great deal of the indignation expressed against him was due to the fact that the charge could not be repudiated. The Protection movement was all due to one man, who a little while ago told us that the Empire was in imminent danger, that our trade was going from us, and that now was the psychological moment ; if we let it slip the opportunity might never recur. And what did we now find ? Here was this pessimist, this physician called in at the last moment to save the expiring patient, who was doing his best to maintain a Government in office which had pledged itself to do nothing on behalf of the patient who was at death's door. How could we believe in the sincerity of the rhetoric which sought to startle our imagination and to drive us almost in despair to a policy which we knew only too well would be fatal to our prosperity ? We adopted Free Trade because we were driven to it by social necessity. We adopted it at a time when our foreign rivals were Protectionist. We had prospered exceedingly under Free Trade. We had in our midst great social evils, for which the Liberal party had struggled and would continue to struggle to find remedies. But whatever evils we suffered from, they were as nothing to the social evils of the protected people of the Continent. Free Trade had given us our great and marvellous maritime supremacy on which the future stability of the Empire depended, and he appealed to the people of this country to be guided by their experience, and not to follow a will-o'-the-wisp who would mislead them a thousand times if they followed him. Let them stick to that system under which they had done so well.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Land and Social Reforms.

MR. F. S. STEVENSON, M.P. (Suffolk—Eye), proposed the following resolution :—

“That this Council again calls attention to the urgent necessity of social reform, particularly in connection with the housing question, the reform of the land laws, the equality of rating, and kindred matters, and once more records its opinion that land values should be taxed so as to contribute their fair share towards the ever-increasing cost of local administration.”

He said that the land question was acknowledged to be that which lay at the root of our social evils, and it confronted us both in the town and in the country. The owners of land in the town, owing to no merit of their own, had been amassing great fortunes through the growth in the value of the land. In the country the opposite process had been taking place. Owners of land had lost large sums of money owing to the fact that they had failed to realise the evils of our present land system, and had done their best to prop it up. In 1851 the number of those employed in agriculture amounted to close upon two millions, whereas according to the last census it amounted to rather less than one million. Although agriculture still remained the greatest individual industry, there had been that enormous decrease in the space of fifty years in the numbers employed in agriculture. Some said this was due to our industrial development. In other countries, however, we had seen a marked industrial advance which had not been accompanied by a corresponding reduction in agriculture. He argued that there was something wrong in a system which did not supply to the individual such an incentive to the cultivation of the soil as that which we found in countries where men had themselves an interest in the soil they tilled. It was necessary therefore that we should have a thoroughgoing reform of the conditions of land-holding in the country as well as in the town.

MR. HENRY VIVIAN (prospective Liberal candidate for Birkenhead) seconded the resolution. He said that Liberals did not deny that there were masses of our people living under conditions which were far from satisfactory. But to restrict exchange, to lessen the supplies or the sources of supply of our raw material, to restrict the markets in which we sold—this was a sure course to more poverty and not to less. They were not, therefore, prepared to accept Mr. Chamberlain's proposals as a remedy. As Liberals they believed that it was along the line of greater freedom for human energy that the solution of the social problem would be found, and not on the line of less freedom. They should remove the parasitic interests that exacted tolls from industry and commerce without rendering any service in return. They believed that this would effect not only a wider distribution of wealth, but would give a stimulus to its creation that would be far more effective than all the tariff-juggling proposed by Mr. Chamberlain and his friends. He expressed a hope that the Liberal party would deal with the question of the reform of the land laws at the earliest possible opportunity they had, for a whole group of social problems would be brought nearer to solution if only this were done.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

SECOND SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

FRIDAY, MAY 13TH.

The second Session of the Council was held in the Midland Hall, at 10.30 a.m. Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C. (President of the Federation), occupied the chair.

Education.

DR. J. MASSIE, Treasurer of the Federation, moved :—

"That this Council is convinced that no satisfactory settlement of the education question can be obtained from the present Government, and that no settlement can be accepted that does not secure for the country a national system of education based on popular control and management and freed from religious tests and sectarian influences."

They could expect, he said, no satisfactory education settlement from the present Government, and sensible men were beginning to ask themselves, "Can any good thing come out of this Government at all?" John Bright, on one occasion, drew a lurid picture of the crowned heads of Europe spending all their time in congratulating one another on their escape from assassination. The crowned heads of our House of Commons—men in power by the accident of the moment or else by the visitation of God upon the nation for its apathy—seemed to be spending as much time as they could spare from the neglect of their duties in felicitating one another that so far they had escaped dissolution. To use the words of the prophet of national decay, "their whole head is sick and their whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot"—whichever Minister that was, and they might take their pick from a very large selection—"from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and"—he did not fear to finish the prophetic quotation—"putrefying sores." "All is gone from their life" Dr. Massie said, "that makes life worth living; all is lost to them except a worm-eaten, threadbare honour which they are always wearing on their sleeves. And yet they clutch desperately at their ebbing vitality. They are like a woman with a past. That past they would smear out if they could. They would yet do something to make their bliss secure. Like the unjust steward, they would make friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, so that when they fail—that is, dissolve—they may be received into fresh habitations on a new lease. Their peace with the Church they have already made; their peace with the brewery yet remains to be made. If they make sure of those two they will have again the old and well-worn alliance of beer and Bible, only the Bible this time with a Church interpretation." Yet the Church was not very comfortable just now. It was a little restive, and if they allowed the Bible to speak for itself the Bible would be more restive still. So Mr. Bung—bearing a strong resemblance to Mr. H. C. Richards, M.P.—made a loud appeal :—"This restiveness is not fair. You know how for many years I have been the champion of religious education—how I have fought the

battles of the clergy, in the interests of the Church. Fair do's, if you please ! Either fight our battles, or, at any rate, if you cannot, do not tie our hands, but leave us free to throttle the nation and to rifle its pockets. A labourer is worthy of his hire ; what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. We only ask what we have already got for you—public money and private management.” So murder came out at last. The biter was bit ; and the clergy had once more to make a choice between profit and honour. Yet the conspirators against national education were now exceedingly uncomfortable. The Act which was intended to be a weapon of precision against troublesome educationists, and particularly Nonconformists, had come back like a boomerang upon the Church and the Government. Lord Londonderry, indeed, let loose the floodgates of his indignation upon them. He said the other day that it was a great Act, and if properly and fairly administered it would be a great success. But Lord Londonderry must not be taken too seriously. His appointment was only to be explained either as an outward and visible sign of Mr. Balfour's utter indifference to education, or else as an intentional slight upon the Education Department. Lord Londonderry's indignation—to quote, with a polite omission, from Shakespeare—was “full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.” How could an improper Act be properly administered ? How could an unfair Act be fairly administered ? The relief from “an intolerable strain” by the infliction of an intolerable wrong had been hotly resented in England—in Church-ridden England—and had been contemptuously spurned in Church-defying Wales. Only statesmanship in an armchair could think it possible to crush this hostility by force. When the reader of the dignified address presented to Mr. Balfour by a representative and equally dignified deputation was instructed to close with the words, “We will not submit,” there were many there who had already counted the cost. There were many there who had since proved that what they said they meant. England was necessarily in this resistance individualistic. Wales could be communal and solid, and to Wales, with its keenness for popular education, we were looking for greater things than could be achieved by the more stolid and apathetic England. But the Government were not very sanguine. They did not expect very much from the stage thunder of Sir William Anson. And, if they did not know it, Mr. Chamberlain could tell them that, though votes against the Government in recent by-elections were given for many reasons—as well they might be—the fiercest work was done by the haters of the Education Act. That fire burned seven times hotter than any other ; and so the Government were looking about for some means wherewith they might damp down that fire. “And they come to us,” Dr. Massie continued, “very pleasantly, and they say ‘You are not really injured by this Education Act. You only think you are ; but nevertheless we are most anxious not to interfere with any man's religious convictions. Come and let us reason together. Let us make some sort of compromise.’ Do not trust them even as far as you can see them. They are

never tired of saying that this fire that they have kindled is remedial. They prefer to describe it as 'the lighted lamp of education.' Yes, a lamp furnished with low-flash oil. And so there has been an explosion, and it has given not light but a conflagration 'to those that be in the house.' How can you expect compromise from men who themselves describe the Act as a compromise? We know from the late Archbishop of Canterbury that it was a bargain." As for the present Archbishop, the power to discern between good and evil seemed not to have come down to him with the episcopal succession. The Bishop of St. Asaph—apparently a bonnet for the Government—had brought forth what was called a compromise. It was a fair-seeming Bill, but things are not what they seem. It was an innocent-looking bantling, but it was born with teeth. What did it mean? If it meant anything it meant that the priest was to enter into schools where he had had no entrance before. It meant that there might be a temporary transfer to the public authority of Church schools while their dilapidations were mended and their insanitary conditions were remedied, while the present walls were made habitable; and then that the re-transfer should be easier than ever it was before. So the Church again gained whatever there was to gain. This so-called compromise was a completion, not a modification, of the Act of 1902. They were sick of the patch which made the rent worse. They were told that there could not be a repeal of this Act. If they could not have a repeal they would have a regeneration. The Act must be born again. It must be possessed by a new spirit, taking to itself a body of its own. It must be conceived in citizenship and shaped in equality. For concession on the part of any church, there was no place. If there was a place for compromise, it was not yet. When compromise was on the march, justice to citizenship must lead the way. But before that could be, the people must be free to move. Just now they were held back like hounds in the leash. Loose them and let them go, and they would soon hunt down the present Ministry, and drive test and priest into their holes. We wanted not only a regenerated measure and a Ministry of new creatures, but a regenerated House of Commons. Their appeal was to the electors of the country, and first of all to Liberals. "Take away," he said, "these baubles of private interest, spurious honour, and tawdry imperialism, and fill the House once more with the glory of freedom and fair play."

MR. F. D. ACLAND (prospective Liberal candidate for the Richmond division of Yorkshire) seconded the resolution. He said there was one matter which had not been dealt with—the Welsh Bill—not the Bill of the Bishop of St. Asaph, but the Bill of the present Government. Without going into details with regard to that Bill or with regard to the way in which it might be fought either in the House of Commons or in the country of Wales, he thought one might say that in the whole history of freedom—and England and Wales were, he hoped, still free countries—it was found that where a Government had been opposed to a people the people were certain to win. They would fail in

any measure of coercion for the people of Wales as they had failed in coercion for Ireland. But the people of Wales did not intend to wait, as the people of Ireland had had to wait, ten or fifteen years for a change of mind on the part of the Conservative party. They intended to have the change made, not by the Conservative party, but by the Liberal party at the earliest possible moment. They affirmed the two principles expressed in the resolution—no say, no pay,—and no appointment of public servants by private individuals under religious tests. He believed that what Wales said to-day England would say to-morrow. There was a great consensus of opinion from all parties and all sects that the position laid down in the resolution would be a fair and acceptable basis, and that when they had given that basis the details could be settled on generous and liberal lines, even in his opinion including some special treatment for schools attended solely by children of one denomination in districts in which there was a really effective choice of schools. What did this subject of education mean? It was a very simple question. It did not mean this or that method of educational machinery, or any particular form of religious ascendancy. It took them back to the very foundation and fundamental aim of their Liberalism—to give everyone the best chance of leading the best possible life. And, if this aim was to be accomplished, it was essential there should be the fullest possible co-operation and friendliness between all the persons interested in religious life, whatever their different points of view might be as to Church government or points of doctrine. That principle was realised rather better by the people of this country than by the politicians. He found in the dales in the Richmond division that the people were alive to their needs in education and to the great defects in the existing system. What was the Act doing? That was the question, after all, on which it must stand or fall. What was it doing to make education better and to increase the opportunities which the people wanted in getting a good training for their children? He said unhesitatingly, after looking at many cases and doing his best to find out the truth, that in a very large number of the great country districts it was doing positive harm. To remove that was a task to which the leaders of the Liberal party must devote their best efforts. They must proceed onward until we had a simple, uniform, national, and thorough system of education.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

National Expenditure.

MR. L. V. HARCOURT, M.P. (Rossendale), moved the following resolution :—

“That this Council views with alarm the enormous growth of the ordinary yearly expenditure of the nation due to the long predominance of the Tory party, and declares such expenditure to be uncalled for by national necessities. In particular, the Council protests against the extravagance of the amounts now spent upon armaments, and against the loss of life and waste of money involved in needless and aggressive expeditions such as those in Somaliland and Tibet.”

He said :—The resolution which has been placed in my hand deals only with the expenditure of the country, but, I take it, it is not intended to exclude the necessary and very unpleasant corollary of taxes. A year ago I was invited to move and draft a resolution on this subject for the Home Counties Liberal Federation, and I did so in these words—"that the expenditure and taxes of this country have increased, are increasing, and ought to be diminished." That is, in a single sentence, what I wish to say to you, and I imagine it is pretty much what you wish to have said. What are the broad facts? The expenditure of the United Kingdom for this year is estimated at the gigantic total of one hundred and forty-three million pounds. That works out at £3 10s. per head of the population, man, woman, and child, so that for a family of five persons it costs £17 10s. a year, or 7s. a week. These are figures I think which ought to give us pause, or if they don't they'll soon give us poverty. It is not only the total amount of our expenditure which is so alarming, but it is the steady annual growth of the expenditure which has been one of the worst and most persistent features of the nine years' administration of our finances by an extravagant and incompetent Tory Government. When the Liberal party left office in 1895 the expenditure of the country was ninety-four millions, to-day it is 143 millions, exclusive of war expenditure, an increase of 49 million pounds in nine years—that is, a yearly average increment of $5\frac{1}{3}$ millions which, translated into taxes, means an additional twopence on the income-tax every year during that period, or an additional sixpence a pound duty on tea each year. These are the peace budgets of Toryism! The King's Speech used to contain in a single paragraph addressed to the members of the House of Commons a statement that "the estimates for the coming year had been framed with due regard to efficiency and economy." But this year the phraseology is ominously changed—the "due regard to economy" is gone, and in its place we have a "desire for economy." There are many things which we all of us desire in this life, but which some of us do not think it worth while even to make an effort to obtain. And there is another striking omission: the Government, overcome with self-knowledge and in pursuit of truth, have omitted also from that paragraph the little word which embodies a great principle—"Efficiency." And well they may, for they have long ceased to pursue that policy, which they have never understood. They remind me of a man who was addicted to alcoholic excess, and went for advice to his doctor. The doctor first of all recommended moderation, but doubting the determination of his patient he added, "When you have had as much drink as you want you had better take a dose of sarsaparilla." The patient returned in a few weeks' time to say that the treatment was a failure. "Why?" said the doctor. "Because," replied the patient, "when I have had as much drink as I want I can't say sarsaparilla." When the Government have had as much expenditure as they want they can't say "economy," and they have forgotten that there is such a thing as "efficiency." Peace abroad, retrenchment at home, reform everywhere. But don't

run away with the idea that solvency can be secured by a stroke of the pen. Megalomania, which is the worst form of lunacy, has eaten into the brains of our rulers. You must extirpate the cause before you can free yourselves from the symptoms of the disease. We all know the symptoms and their results—they are a swaggering spirit and a lust for territory, followed by bloated armaments in times of so-called peace. The first treatment for the complaint is the return of a Liberal Government to power, but the alleviation of the symptoms must be necessarily slow. You may have ruthless reduction in a day, but reasoned retrenchment is the triumph of years of economy. In private life, which, after all, is not a bad analogy of public conduct, when a man is outrunning the constable he takes one or more of several courses—some reduce their luxuries, some omit their charities, others cease to pay their bills. The latter method I do not recommend to you, though it forms part of the Budget of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, who seems to think that by filing the bill for a deficit he can avoid liability for the debt, and is under the impression that there is no County Court for recalcitrant Chancellors. Let us look, for a moment, at our public pass-book, and see where retrenchment can begin, and how far it can be carried. Our National Expenditure of £143,000,000 can be roughly divided into five great blocks: (1) National Debt, £27,000,000; (2) Revenue and other Services, £21,000,000; (3) Civil Services, £28,000,000; (4) Navy, £37,000,000; and (5) Army, £29,500,000. Let me take them in that order. In the service of the National Debt no reduction can be made. We have added to the capital of that Debt £135,500,000 in the last five years—an amount just about equal to the savings effected and debt redeemed in the previous twenty years of sounder and saner finance. And even to-day, with the great annual sacrifice of £27,000,000 which we are called upon to make for the service of the Debt, in my opinion, with Consols at under 90, the Sinking Fund is insufficient to maintain our National Credit at the figure at which we have been accustomed to see it. No economies, therefore, are possible under this head; nor in the next item of the cost of Revenue Services, though we might secure large economies in our customs service if we once established a Free Breakfast Table. I then come to the Civil Services. The increase of 1½ million under this head is one which we cannot reduce—and would not if we could—for it is spent entirely on Education. That is an investment of public capital in a gilt-edged security, which will pay us in the future a high rate of interest in national prosperity—though many of us would be glad if we could feel that the whole of this money was devoted to real education, and that none of it was used to promote sectarian dogma or religious strife. There is, however, one piece of wasteful expenditure which I must class under Civil Services and which might well be saved under any scheme of retrenchment—I mean this new and pernicious system of doles to favoured classes. They are Tory extravagances of charity to the undeserving. They amount to something like £2,000,000 a year, and to that extent offer

some opening for reduction of expenditure, and would enable an immediate remission of 2d. a lb. off the present duty upon tea. Then I come to the Navy, on which we are spending (including monies provided by the Naval Works Acts) £41,389,000 this year as against £39,000,000 last year—an increase of nearly 2½ millions over the previous estimates which were even then the highest that had ever been proposed. I suppose we are most of us “big navy” men, but the question is—how big? Don’t let us be carried away by a phrase, or frightened into extravagance by the panic-mongers of the Admiralty. There must be some limit to the passion for shipbuilding, as for other excesses. What is necessary is that the people themselves should define the limits and see that the Government adhere to them. We have to guard against such transactions as the purchase without Parliamentary authority in November of two Chilean battleships which the Prime Minister in July had stated to be “quite unsuitable for our purpose.” The Admiralty shipbuilding programme used to be based on what was called the “two Power standard”—it may have been necessary, it was certainly costly, and I believe it was wasteful, because our shipbuilding, which was 30 per cent. more rapid and 40 per cent. cheaper than that of other Powers, was based on the paper programme of the foreigner, and we often commenced and completed a ship to equal one “projected” by France which was never ultimately laid down or built at all. But even this so-called and exaggerated “two Power standard” has now gone by the board. It is a “three Power standard” or even a “whole world standard”—for nothing but such an assumption as this—a conviction on the part of our rulers that the result of their policy must be to combine a whole world in arms against us—nothing but such a belief as this could excuse or account for an increase of 2½ millions beyond the largest naval estimates ever known, and in such a year as this when not only have we made a treaty of amity and of settlement with our great neighbours in France but a year also in which we have seen the fleet of Russia fatally crippled and even partially destroyed. Remember that it costs us over a million to complete a first class line of battleship which may be blown into the air by a torpedo costing a few hundreds or a submarine costing a few thousands of pounds. But this initial expenditure on a single ship does not indicate to the taxpayer the permanent liability to which he is binding himself. The financial secretary to the Admiralty, in answer to a question of mine, told us that the cost of manning and maintaining a battleship amounts altogether to about £100,000 a year, and represented a capital expenditure of £4,000,000, not reckoning the million incurred in the building of the ship. They are the permanent liabilities which attach to the addition of every new ship to our Navy—but they are never pointed out to Parliament or the country by the responsible Minister when he is making his proposals. When the Liberal party left office in 1895 the expenditure on the Navy was under £20,000,000 a year; to-day it is £41,389,000—more than double. But we had not starved the Navy—we had done more for it than any of our opponents and predecessors. This is not a

matter of dispute, it is a fact of common knowledge admitted by Mr. Balfour himself, for he said in a public speech in this very town immediately after we had gone out of office that we had left the British Empire a better fighting machine than it had ever been before. Some people thought that this referred to the Army—Mr. Balfour denied the inference, and said he was specially referring to the Navy—so I rest my case on his words and I say that if the British Navy was a first-rate fighting force in 1896 it cannot be necessary that we should now be spending on it £21,000,000 a year more than we did then. The expenditure by our great foreign competitors in shipbuilding is infinitely less than our own and is hardly increasing at all. The total naval expenditure of France is 12½ millions, Russia 12 millions, Germany 11 millions—that is a total of 35½ millions for these three Powers against our 41 millions. But look also at the comparative rate of increase under this head of expenditure. Comparing the estimates of 1901 with those of 1904 (an interval of four years) I find an increase of naval expenditure in Germany of £1,400,000, in Russia of £400,000, while in France there has been a decrease of £600,000, making for the three Powers a net increase of only 1½ million. But comparing our own naval estimates of the same years what do we find?—an increase of annual charge of £7,600,000—or six times the whole increase of these three Powers combined. I therefore say that even on the Navy, which we all desire to see supreme, there is an open field for prudent and statesmanlike economy, especially if this country is wise enough to abandon that limitless pegging-out of claims which, whilst it enlarges the extremities, weakens the heart of the Empire, and still more will that economy be possible if our rulers of to-day and of the future will endeavour to seek not only the neutrality of our rivals but the friendship of our neighbours, and with an unswerving purpose will seek and pursue it. And now I come to my last head of expenditure and my greatest hope of economy. These are the facts: The estimates for the Army in the last year in which the Liberals were in office were £18,500,000; so sufficient did this provision seem to the Tory party who succeeded us that they actually reduced the estimates by a quarter of a million in the two succeeding years; the total Army Estimates for the year before the war were only £1,500,000 higher than we had left them, that is they had risen from 18½ millions to 20 millions; but since that time the normal army estimates, omitting all war expenditure, have risen by another 9 millions a year—that is, whereas we left them at 18½ millions, they are to-day 29 millions, or an increase of 10½ millions during the tenure of office by the Tory party—an increase of expenditure which represents more than 4d. on the Income-tax, or more than the whole of the tea duty, for one branch of our fighting force alone. Now, so far as this larger expenditure has gone to increase the pay of the private soldier, and to improve the conditions of his service, I have not a word to say. I think it is a duty we owed to those who serve us, and it has tended to assist the enlistment which is never very good except in times of distress, and is always specially slack after the conclusion of a great

war. But so far as this expenditure has gone to enlarge the numbers of our standing army I believe that it has been a mistaken and a wasteful expenditure. I believe that army expenditure can be reduced, and ought to be reduced by a general recognition of the fact that we cannot be, and do not wish to be, anything in the nature of a Continental Military Power; what we require is to be able to put on board ship, with the utmost rapidity, an expeditionary force of moderate size, which can go to the boundaries of our possessions where the wheels of Empire may be creaking in the ruts of expansion. We do not intend, we do not wish, we are not fit, to conduct a European land war of aggression. We want a small force for home defence; how small a one is necessary few people realise, if you only treat your volunteers well and do not snub and discourage them as the War Office seem always inclined to do. Above all let us once and for all clear our minds of the ridiculous notion that army reform necessarily means efficiency, or that War Office reform ever means economy. The battle of the boards is too often the ruin of the taxpayer—six army corps are the costly plaything for the moment of a transient failure—barracks spring up like mushrooms on Salisbury Plain, and wither under the blast of re-organisation—the Commander-in-Chief becomes an Inspector-General—the Secretary of State for War is overlaid in infancy by an Army Board—the Committee of Three, armed with a self-assumed infallibility, pronounce a major excommunication on their critics—the Prime Minister, full of philosophic doubts and unsettled convictions, presides over the Committee of National Defence, and believes himself to be a tactician—the War Commission and its Report are buried in indecent oblivion—and all the time the taxpayer pays. Had there been time I should have liked to say something to you also on the question of taxation. I should like to have pointed out to you the great inequality and injustice of the excess of indirect taxation on the poor—the taxes on commodities—imposed during the war, and still in force, as compared with the direct taxation, the taxes on the rich, a large portion of which has been already remitted. The taxes imposed during, and since the war, have been: Direct taxes 7d. on the Income-tax, yielding £17,500,000. Indirect taxes—tea, 4d. lb.; tobacco, 4d. lb.; spirits, 6d. gallon; beer, 1s. barrel; sugar, 4s. 2d. cwt.; coal, 1s. ton export; corn, 1s. quarter—yielding £18,123,000, or half a million more than the direct taxes. But what have been the remissions? Threepence has been taken off the Income-tax, a relief to the direct taxpayer of £7,500,000, but only the 1s. duty on corn has been removed from the indirect taxpayer with a relief of £2,500,000 as against the £7,500,000 given to his more fortunate companion and rival. The net result is this—that we are to-day paying in taxes no less than £25,623,000 per annum more than at the commencement of the war; but £10,000,000 of this only is paid by the direct taxpayer, and £15,623,000 by the indirect taxpayer and consumer. That, in my view, is not justice—it is not common honesty. But I belong to an old, perhaps an unfashionable, school. I do not believe in these new-fangled nostrums of taxing ourselves into

prosperity. I want neither to broaden the basis of our taxation, which means increasing the burdens on the poor, nor do I want a "scientific tariff," which means increasing the profits of the rich. I believe that the greatest good of the greatest number will be found in prudence, economy, retrenchment, which can only be attained by a policy of moderation at home and sanity abroad.

MR. A. E. W. MASON (prospective Liberal candidate for Coventry) seconded the resolution. For the purposes of a spendthrift Government, he said, the British nation was represented as a "strong man," capable of bearing any burden. Such was the picture which a Conservative Ministry usually drew in the interval between Easter and Whitsuntide, when the Budget was before the country. After that the picture was changed. It was discovered that the strong man's big muscles were, after all, only padded, and that, when stripped of the padding, he was not a strong man at all, but a skeleton dude, who could be only saved from consumption by a high-frequency treatment of preferential tariffs. The point to which the resolution directed attention was that, whether the nation were a strong man or a skeleton dude, the burden was not lifted from its chest. Sometimes a warning was uttered. But the nation was not allowed to say for itself whether the weight was too heavy; and at the moment the warning voice was speaking, additional weights were added to those already borne. To estimate the amount of the national expenditure at the present moment was difficult, because money, even in smaller masses than millions, was apt to take on a dreamlike and an imaginary aspect. There was an old and simple illustration, but a good one—if you bought a pound of tea at 1s. 4d., one-half the price went to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Similarly, of the 3d. paid for an ounce of tobacco, 2½d. went to the Treasury. That money was intended for the good government of the country and its dependencies; and so long as it was certainly directed to that end—however heavy the burden might be—the people would hardly grudge it. But the reason of their hostility was that the money demanded by Government was diverted to purposes of speculation. Alluding to the expedition to Somaliland, Mr. Mason said we were told that the lessons to be learned from the Boer war would be taken to heart, and yet we saw that in its methods and execution that expedition was a miniature Boer war. The cheap force had become a costly army, the small expense had become a great expense, and the result was sheer, absolute futility. The tendencies of the Government had been to exploit for its advantage the innate pugnacity of the English race. He did not undervalue that quality. He reckoned it a great national asset. It had inspired us with very chivalrous policies in past times, and the weak and the downtrodden in many corners of the world could bear witness to its virtues. But it was one of those qualities which could be most easily corrupted, and when corrupted it was one of the worst. Restrained, it made a hero; exploited, it turned that hero into a bully.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Temperance Reform.

MR. WHITTAKER, M.P. (Yorkshire—Spenn Valley), moved :—

“That this Council strongly condemns the Government Licensing Bill, since it interferes with the discretion of the Magistrates, does nothing to popularise the constitution of the Licensing Authority, and by creating for the first time a vested interest in a licence, places new and serious obstacles in the way of Temperance Reform.”

He said there was no case whatever for this Bill—no case for compensation without reform. Every man in the trade had long known the law and the risks he ran. The trade went in to make profits, and big profits they had made. Having a precarious security, they should have formed a depreciation fund. If they failed to do it, the fault was theirs. There was no case on the ground that there had been a special and heavy reduction in the number of licences. The figures for 1903 had often been quoted. He pointed out that outside London no brewster sessions were held in 1902 owing to the introduction of new legislation. Therefore the figures of 1903 represented the reductions for two years. On that basis, the average number of refusals by the local justices for each of those years, for which they had information, since the Royal Commission was only 221; whereas the average for the preceding twenty-one years was 331 per annum. He was not opposed to legalisation, if necessary, of compensation by the trade to the trade, but on conditions. One of those conditions was that the discretion of the magistrates should not be interfered with; another, that the whole of the money must come out of the pockets of the trade; another, that it must be a temporary expedient to get over a temporary difficulty; and the last and most important was that it must be part and parcel of a great scheme of efficient temperance reform. This Bill gave no reform, it secured no reduction, but it blocked the way for the future. The fund that would be raised under the Bill would be totally inadequate. Outside the county boroughs there were 900 licensing areas, and the compensation fund on its fullest assessment would, on the average, only give each area £605 a year, or barely enough to enable each of them to buy up one licence a year. Under the Bill, on the assumption that the licences abolished were each worth £1,000, it would take Sheffield thirty years to get to the level of Leeds, and thirty-two years to get to the condition of London—and it was not impossible to get drunk in London. If a licence in Brighton to be abolished were taken to be worth £1,000 it would take forty-two years to bring that town to the condition of London; or if worth £750 it would take thirty-two years. Norwich, if its licences were each worth £1,000, would take ninety-three years to get to the level of London. Taking the county of Huntingdon, to bring down the number of licences to one to every 300 of the population, and supposing that in an agricultural district the licences were worth £500 apiece, it would take them 165 years to get them to that level. This was a farce. And then, as though the trade were conceding something

to the nation, as though when compensation was given they were surrendering something, the price we had to give was our control of the licensing justices, and quarter sessions was to be exalted. There was nothing more vital to the efficiency of our licensing system than the local control of justices, who, under the threat of non-renewal, brought enormous influence to bear on publicans. He would further ask what non-county boroughs had done to be deprived of their licensing jurisdiction in important directions. There were 250 of them, and what had they done? During the last seven years, only an average of one decision a year in thirty-four boroughs had been reversed by quarter sessions, and yet their discretion was to be taken away on the important matter of non-renewal. The Bill was full of checks and hindrances, and gave full liberty to everybody to do nothing, but as soon as anyone wanted to be active there was a check and limitation. There was no reform, no stimulus in any direction. Compensation was only tolerable if it would secure greater freedom to the localities to work out their own salvation. The mere reduction of licences was not a great end of itself. What they wanted was to clear the way so as to deal freely with this liquor traffic as they liked in each locality. This Bill shut the door against future reform and locked it. We had heard in the past about pro-Boers. What about pro-brewers? It was a prince of the royal blood who said the greatest enemy England had to fear was drink. It was a far more serious crime against the well-being of our Empire to befriend the enemy at home than one abroad. We had more to fear from this enemy at home than from all the nations on the face of the earth.

DR. A. P. THOMAS (prospective Liberal candidate for Bootle) seconded the resolution. As a citizen of Liverpool, he said, he came from a city which had suffered in the past from the indiscriminate bestowal of licences, and which had realised, during the last fourteen years, how much could be done in the way of remedying the evils by the resolute application of their unfettered discretion on the part of a judicious and enlightened magistracy. And when he looked at the two great parties to this controversy he saw on the one side the trade, and on the other side the people. The trade was the wealthiest body in the land. It had acquired its wealth by the free bestowal of the people of the country; he saw in the people a nation energetic and industrious, but afflicted by the one vice of addiction to insobriety, which hindered it in the race with other nations. The people should retain their privilege and say, "You shall exercise the monopoly which we have given you subject to the control of the people, exercised through the magistrates. But that which we have freely bestowed we reserve, in the interest of the nation, the right to freely withdraw." That was the position of the controversy, and he thought a great statesman approaching it with a view to the improvement of the condition of the people might well say, when he was asked by the trade for compensation and more safeguards, "Compensation you have had in advance, and as to safeguards, it is not more safeguards for the trade

that are wanted, but more safeguards for the people." The whole administrative control, the one most vital instrument in the reform of the public-houses of this country, was taken away from the hands of the representatives of the people, such as we had them now. The Bill was full of intricacies, perplexities, anomalies, confusions, and absurdities, but every one, singular to say, was in favour of the brewers. This was said to be a Government of paradoxes. Paradoxes as a literary accomplishment were all very well, but when translated into principles of action they became a danger to the State. And when we saw this Government professing to proceed to Free Trade through Protection, to liberty through serfdom, and to temperance through the endowment of brewers, it was no wonder that the people of this country demanded not only a time limit to their measures, but a speedy time limit to their existence. And the Government knew that this time limit was at hand. For all their brave words they knew that they were stricken with a mortal disease, and they were now using the last period of their condemned but unrepentant existence to make this their last will and testament, by which they sought to bequeath to their friends the brewers a freehold interest in their privileges for ever—to disinherit the people of this country of the rights they had enjoyed for nearly 400 years. Liberals would not accept the Bill. They would carry their case before the court of the people, and would enter a caveat against this testament. They would say it had been obtained by undue influence, and that the testator, at the time he executed it, was not of sound mind, memory or understanding. There was work to be done in educating the people, till those who sat on the Ministerial benches recognised, by the condemnation which they pronounced, that it was not the will of the people that the Bill should pass into law.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Chinese Labour.

MR. CHARLES FENWICK, M.P. (Northumberland — Wansbeck), moved :—

"That this Council protests against the Ordinance permitting the introduction of indentured Chinese labour into the Transvaal, and, whilst challenging the statement that cheap foreign labour is a commercial necessity, places on record its conviction that the proposal is inconsistent with the common law of England, destructive of the love of liberty, inimical to the true interests of South Africa, and likely to weaken the bond of union between the several portions of the Empire."

If he were not, he said, the person selected to move the resolution, he should say that there was a special fitness in the arrangement entrusting such a resolution to a miner, especially seeing that they had it upon excellent authority that the late war was a miners' war. Most of them would have observed how very sensitive and tender the Tory conscience had recently become, more especially since the passing of the Chinese Labour Ordinance. During the last Election the Tories

were never tired of speaking evil of their political opponents, and of hurling at them such epithets as "Pro-Boer," "Little Englander," and even "Traitor." These epithets they seemed to roll like sweet morsels under their tongues; but let anyone now suggest, in connection with the Chinese Ordinance, that it savoured of slavery, then it was like a cry of "rats" in the ear of a fox-terrier. There was an instantaneous and perceptible "rising of the gorge." Yet he ventured to assert that the Bishop of Hereford was right when he declared in the House of Lords, speaking of this Ordinance, that, "veil it as they would, they had in this Ordinance the essence of slavery," notwithstanding the cruel and bitter irony of the fact that in two solemn Conventions, one signed at Pretoria in 1881 and the other in London in 1884, in which our Government laid it down that no slavery or even apprenticeship partaking of slavery would be permitted within the State of the South African Republic. He was surprised to find the Prime Minister suffering from a defect of mental perception, for he had declared again and again that he was unable to perceive in the terms of the Transvaal Ordinance any practical difference from the Ordinance now in operation in British Guiana. He would be sorry to pit himself against the Prime Minister in a competitive examination on mental perception, but Mr. Balfour could not have read the documents and compared their terms or he would never have committed himself to such a statement as that there was no practical difference between the Transvaal and Guiana Ordinances. He mentioned four points of contrast between the two Ordinances which, he said, proved that there was a considerable difference in them. In the Transvaal the labourer was not permitted to hold any fixed property or mineral rights or to engage in any business; he was condemned by the terms of his indentures to the performance of the work of unskilled labour in the mines. However thrifty and prudent and saving he might be, he was not to have the right to a free investment of his savings in any property in the Transvaal. In British Guiana one searched in vain for any such restrictions imposed on the imported labourer. Then as to the question of access to the courts, in the Transvaal the labourer could only have access through the intervention of his superintendent or inspector. In British Guiana the labourer had direct access to the courts. Then, too, ill-treatment on the part of the employer in British Guiana—as was not the case in the Transvaal—was made a criminal offence. There, if such ill-treatment took place, the labourer could immediately leave his employment without let or hindrance on the part of the employer, and could appeal to the court. If he succeeded in establishing his case he had not only the satisfaction of seeing his employer punished for a criminal offence, but he had also an indemnity afforded him for the ill-treatment. Lastly, there was the position of the two labourers at the end of their contracts. One was ignominiously to be kicked out of the country, whereas the other was entitled to receive a certificate exempting him from service in the colony, he was encouraged to settle in the colony, and the Government made his stay in the colony all the more profitable to him by offering

him land at a reasonable cost. In face of facts such as these it could not be contended that there was no practical difference in the two Ordinances. The shortage of labour in the South African mines, he thought, was more apparent than real. But, even if it were real, it was a thing which ought not to create surprise, having regard to the devastating war carried on in that country for practically three years. A little more patience on the part of those who were so anxious to grow rich would have got over the difficulty. He could not help thinking, again, that the shortage of native labour was not absolutely unconnected with the action of the Native Labour Association in the Transvaal. He had received a letter, under date the 5th of last month, from a Northumberland miner in South Africa. His correspondent drew attention to the action of the Native Labour Association, and he mentioned the case of a man who recruited at his own expense 400 "boys," brought them into the mines, and they were working under contract when the Native Labour Association became aware of the fact. Because this man refused to turn over the "boys" to be dispersed to the various mines through the action of the Association, both he and his "boys" were thrown out of employment. Wages and treatment were two powerful factors which operated as an attraction or a repellant to working-men. If wages were high and the treatment good, no matter what the nature of the industry might be, labour was always to be had for that industry. If wages were low and the treatment bad, and occasionally it was necessary to apply a gentle stimulus of cowhide, then we must not be surprised if labour did not gravitate to that particular industry. The native labourer in South Africa no more than the native labourer at home cared to have his stimulants administered to him in the form of cowhide. Then the dreadful death-rate in the mines of South Africa was in itself sufficient to account for the shortage of native labour. When the death-rate in the mines rose to between seventy and eighty per thousand, could they wonder that the natives should hesitate and hang fire rather than take employment there? As to the alleged unanimity of opinion amongst the white population in South Africa, he asked whether it was certain the white population in the Transvaal were in favour of the introduction of the Chinese? What method had been adopted to ascertain the sense of public opinion? The Government had refused to apply the referendum; the voice of labour in the Transvaal was inarticulate. It was said that it was necessary that cheap labour should be obtained in order to make the mines pay in South Africa. He denied, however, that it was the duty of the Government to provide cheap labour for employers. He also denied the necessity for cheap labour in order to secure an adequate output in the mines. In the first three months of this year the total value of the gold mined was £3,770,473, or equal to an annual output of the value of £15,081,892. And yet we were only removed by about two years from the conclusion of the war. Surely if the Randlords would have a little patience they would soon be able to reap an ample reward for their labours in South Africa.

MR. ELLIS J. GRIFFITH, M.P. (Anglesey), seconded the resolution. Looking at the past record of the Government, he said, there was no act of theirs more discreditable than the introduction of Chinese labour into South Africa. He could understand their giving money to the Church schools; the Church had done a good deal for them. It deserved its reward and had got it, in a form that it understood—hard cash from year to year. He could understand the Government doing something for the Church and the brewers; but what justification, what excuse could be alleged for the Government taking the desperate step of introducing Chinese labour into South Africa? The reasons for the shortage of labour in the mines were that wages had been reduced from 45s. to 30s. a month; that the treatment of the natives had been such as to discourage them from going back to the mines; and the high rate of mortality in those mines. During the war the death-rate amongst our soldiers was only forty per thousand. In the mines in 1902-3 it had been seventy per thousand per annum, and in one case at any rate it rose to 106. There was no necessity, regrettable or otherwise, for introducing Chinese labour into South Africa, and even if there were a so-called industrial necessity, and mine-owners said they could not get the gold they wanted to get, let the gold remain where it was. They could pay too dearly for gold, and if they introduced slavery or anything partaking of slavery under the British flag they paid a dearer and a greater price than all the gold that lay hidden in the Transvaal was worth. As to the "necessity," there was a shrewd suspicion that if the white population of the Transvaal were polled upon the matter there would be a tremendous majority against the importation of Chinese labour. One of their regrets in connection with this controversy must be that the Archbishop of Canterbury, the head of the Church of England, speaking in the House of Lords in his official capacity, declared that this was a "regrettable necessity." Those were not exactly the words to be expected from a great representative of a great Church in this country. As a Nonconformist he was proud to think that the leading part in the fight, whether it were against the Chinese Ordinance, the Licensing Bill, or for measures of reform, was left to the Nonconformists. He trusted the day was not far off when another Government and another party would come into power, and, when they did, one of the very first and most important things they must do was to remove from the statute-book of the realm the stain and scandal of this Ordinance for slavery in South Africa.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Vote of Thanks to Manchester Liberals.

MR. EDWARD EVANS, JUNR. (Chairman of Committee of the Federation), moved:—

"That the best thanks of the Council be tendered to the President of the Manchester Liberal Federation and his colleagues, and to the officers and members of the Reception Committee, for their excellent arrangements in connection with the visit of the Federation to Manchester, also to

Mr. C. E. Schwann, M.P., and Mrs. Schwann, and to Mr. J. Emmott Barlow, M.P., President of the Reform Club, and the Committee of the Club for their generous hospitality."

No one regretted more than he did the enforced absence of their old friend, Dr. Spence Watson, who had usually moved this resolution at the close of the Federation meetings. He was pleased to announce that Dr. Watson was now in improved health, and his friends hoped to see him soon completely restored. All who had attended them would agree that the Federation had never had better or more unanimous meetings than these in Manchester, nor had they listened to better speeches. They might rest satisfied, after hearing the prospective Liberal candidates, that in the future Liberal principles would be ably advocated in the House of Commons by the sons of honoured statesmen.

The resolution was seconded by a Delegate in the body of the hall and carried enthusiastically.

MR. WILLIAM ROYLE (Chairman of the Manchester Liberal Federation) responded, and the meeting ended.

MEETING IN FREE TRADE HALL.

MAY 13th, 1904.

On Friday evening a mass meeting was held in the Free Trade Hall. The hall was crowded, upwards of 5,000 persons being present, and the proceedings were throughout enthusiastic. The Chair was taken by Mr. C. E. Schwann, M.P. (President of the Manchester Liberal Federation).

THE CHAIRMAN said the Liberals of Manchester felt highly honoured by the visit of the National Liberal Federation, which, according to their own account, had been enormously successful. They had held mammoth meetings, and he was sure anybody who looked around that crowded hall would agree that that also was a mammoth meeting. There had been splendid speaking, and he was sure the interchange of ideas between Liberals from all parts of the United Kingdom could not but contribute to the progress of their great cause. There had been an inspiring thought behind all those meetings and all the enthusiasm and energy that had been shown. It had been the coming events that had cast their shadows before. They had just heard from the great oracle himself that a general election must not be unreasonably delayed. He was sorry to say that for some years back they had not always been so full of discretion and wisdom as they were now. He believed that England was to some extent, perhaps, over prosperous, and, like Jeshurun, they had "waxed fat and kicked." They had drunk, not only in Lancashire, but all over the country, too deep potations of Jingoism, and there were only signs now that the head was beginning to clear. But he did not know anyone more able than Mr. Morley—the greatest and most illustrious of Lancashire's living sons—to bring them again into the path of sobriety and better doing. He had no doubt that they had all been discussing of late the character of the two chief Conservative leaders. So far as he was concerned he had more fear of the casuist Mr. Balfour than of the opportunist Mr. Chamberlain. He did not think any of them admired very much Mr. Chamberlain's later methods—his new diplomacy and his newly-developed faculty of stating as positive facts things which had no existence in reality. But since we had discovered that that was one of his little failings, everybody had lost confidence in his judgment, and it was felt that he had abandoned the rôle of statesman for that of a swashbuckling politician. But Mr. Balfour had, in his opinion, a still more fatal gift, that of making right appear wrong and wrong appear right. He believed that had done more injury than even Mr. Chamberlain's failings to the cause of moral political life. Both of them, however, agreed in one thing, that they wished to see the rich richer. They wished to see landlords, and brewers, and mine-owners advancing in wealth, and that had been the key of a great deal of the legislation which we had seen in recent years. In addressing a meeting of the Primrose League a week ago, Mr. Balfour

said that the watchwords of the Primrose League, and presumably of the Tory party, were "Imperialism and Liberty." It seemed to him that anybody who had faith in the depreciated shares of Imperialism at this date must be wanting in common sense and judgment. They had only to look at South Africa to see what precious lives and enormous wealth we spent. And what had we gained? Chaos and confusion in that country. If we looked at Somaliland we should see it had cost the country £2,370,000, and by turning our eyes to Russia we saw what the effect of aggressive and aggrandising Imperialism was at this moment in the Far East. We knew what Tory liberty was. It was liberty to the mine-owner to bring over Chinese to South Africa and keep them there in corrugated iron compounds for three years and then send them back—dead or alive—to China; and in his opinion more would be dead than alive when the three years were over. We had seen how the mine-owners treated the Kaffirs—those patient labourers—and we could only expect that the sjambok and the mortality in the mines would be still more strongly felt by the Chinese. Tory liberty meant liberty to the brewer to ruin the humble but honest homes of the poor. Tory liberty meant permission to the monopolist manufacturer to protect himself by high duties and then sell dear goods to the general consumer. Liberals wished to come into power in order that they might introduce a better kind of liberty. It was not from greed of emoluments that they wished to return to office; it was because they wished to have power to reverse the evil that had been worked by the present Ministry and to bring the country back to the path of economy, peace, and social reform.

SPEECH BY MR. JOHN MORLEY, M.P.

THE RT. HON. JOHN MORLEY, M.P., *who met with an enthusiastic reception, said:—*

Mr. Schwann, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I always think that the reception that I have received before now—and have received to-night—in this hall, is partly due, perhaps mainly due, to the fact that I am a Lancashire man. Gentlemen, it is some years since I last had the honour of addressing the powerful organisation of our party which greets me here to-night. During those years great events have happened. Beyond all comparison the greatest event, the greatest transaction, was the war in South Africa, which ended in what some consider a magnificent conquest, and others regard as an evil blunder—if not something worse. I hope I am not presumptuous to-night in taking, first of all, what I am told was the unanimous invitation of the members of this Federation that I should address you to-night, and, second, the welcome that you have just been kind enough to give me, as indications that neither the attitude that I took in respect of that national transaction, nor the way in which I have otherwise

occupied my time, has forfeited that cordiality and confidence which, in years gone by, this Federation generously extended to me. I thank you very heartily.

The Break-up of a Great Party.

Now, we have met, as your Chairman has reminded you, at what I do not hesitate to describe as one of the most remarkable and interesting moments in our political, our party, and our national history. What do we see? We see the break-up of a great party, that has had rule over this country, with an interval too inconsiderable to be worth recalling, for the best part of twenty years. Oh, did I say the best part? I meant the longest. The two are not quite the same thing. Now, gentlemen, I am not going to make this break-up of the Unionist party a matter for common gibes and taunts. The break-up of a party that has governed the country for twenty years is no ordinary incident. It is a grave incident; it is an incident of profound significance, and it will make and leave its mark upon the history of our party, of both parties, and of the country.

Mr. Balfour's Cabinet and its Successor.

The Chairman has referred to-night to a speech made by the Prime Minister, one of your Manchester representatives as well as Prime Minister, at the Albert Hall. The Chairman stated that the Prime Minister on that occasion made a reference to the lists of a new Cabinet that was some day to take the place of his own. I have not seen any of them myself. I do not exercise myself in these high matters. The Chairman said, to my surprise, that our party was eager—I think that was the word—(MR. SCHWANN: “No”)—well, something like that—to take their place. What a morbid taste must a man have to take the place of these gentlemen, and to fulfil the enormous, complicated, gigantic, and chaotic tasks which they leave to their successors!

The “Sheffield Policy.”

On this occasion the Prime Minister said that he had heard of these lists of new Cabinets, but there was no programme. There was a hierarchy, he said, but no creed. Well, but he never gave one single word upon his own creed, or to the momentous question that since last September at all events—I may even say since last May—has agitated the country. There was not a syllable in defence of what is called his Sheffield policy, though what that Sheffield policy is I really have no idea. A few weeks ago in the House of Commons the Prime Minister spoke of a great change in fiscal policy. Well, I, sitting meekly and modestly on the other side of the table, said,

"What change?" He gave what is called an evasive answer. I then said, "Well, but what change?" because I like to know what I am talking about—I like to know what I am contending against. I again said, "Well, what is the change?" The Prime Minister said, "Well, it's the change that drove the Duke of Devonshire out of the Cabinet." But how impertinent it would be of me to go to Chatsworth or Devonshire House and say, "What was it that drove you out of the Cabinet?" because that is the policy, whatever it was, of His Majesty's Government. I even applied a third time—I was almost afraid of being called to order upon this occasion—and asked, "What is the change?" There was no more answer to me than there was to the Dames and Harbingers of the Primrose League.

The Leader who Means to Lead.

Well, but now what is the good of being made a Grand Master of the Primrose League if you cannot tell them what your policy is? The leader "who means to lead," why cannot he tell his own friends what his policy is? This is a Grand Master with a vengeance. After all, the Primrose League is no worse off than the House of Commons. It is pretty well admitted that the House of Commons at this moment does not represent the opinion of the country. Gentlemen, I am rather a stickler for the authority of an elected Parliament. Rather to the dissatisfaction, I fear, of some of my friends, I have never said that, when a Parliament was duly elected, the majority of that Parliament, or the Government representing the majority, had not a right to make the best use they could of it—the best or the worst—for purposes that they thought the welfare of the country required. So strong a view do I take of the authority of a duly elected Parliament.

Why Education and Temperance but not Fiscal Policy?

But then I ask myself, and I ask the Prime Minister, this question: "If you dare not tell your Primrose League what your fiscal policy is, on the ground that Parliament was not elected to discuss that policy, that it may be one, two, or three years hence before public opinion; and the opinion of Parliament is ripe to decide that question of policy, why, forsooth, is it ripe to discuss the education question? Why is it ripe to discuss the temperance question? After all, the question of Free Trade and Protection was settled only sixty years ago, or less; but some fundamental points in the temperance question were settled in the reigns of Henry VII. and Edward VI. In those reigns it was established that justices had a right to determine how many alehouses there should be in this or that

locality. I am not going into that, but I fail entirely to comprehend why, if this Parliament is free from the mandate or the authority given to it in the year 1900, if it is free to discuss education, if it is free to discuss temperance and other things, I can't imagine the cause of this extraordinary delay in the question which was flung down a year ago for discussion in the country—I mean the question of Free Trade against Protection.

Sitting on the Fence.

Well, but now we know very well what the reason is why the Prime Minister dare not come out of the clouds and say what his fiscal policy is. I read, I suppose like most of you, this morning, eagerly, the speech of a very important confederate of the Prime Minister, and his observations are just such as I would make if I were criticising the speech of the Prime Minister the last time he addressed people outside the House of Commons. In the House we are not allowed to discuss the matter; but here is what was said last night at Birmingham: "Victories in politics are like victories in war. They are won by enthusiasm, they are lost by timidity." Let me explain. I do not mean to say that last night the orator of Birmingham was referring to the Primrose League speech, but he laid down some doctrines to which I, for one, subscribe. He said, "It is not, after all, a good policy—to say nothing at all about morality—it is not a good policy to sit upon a fence." "Those," he said, "who adopt the Cromwellian motto"—which, by the way, was not that of Cromwell but of Strafford—"those who adopt the Cromwellian motto and put 'Thorough' as their guiding motto will be much more likely to be successful than those," whoever they may be, "who are half-hearted, weak-kneed, and trying to catch a breeze that will never come." "At the next election," he said, "whatever its result, . . . let us hold our banner high." I am all for holding banners high, whatever the inscription upon them is. But it is very awkward for people who do not like your banner and do not like your inscription.

The Doomed Sheep.

And Mr. Chamberlain says that, if there were a Referendum on his policy, he is quite confident what the result would be. He is not confident, I gather, what the result of a Referendum on the Sheffield policy would be. Mr. Chamberlain has met some rather curious people, I think, lately. He said that some people who were all for fiscal reform and scientific taxation, would not vote for those two great objects because they placed above all the education question. I do not suppose that there is any man in this hall who feels more strongly

than I do about what is called a settlement of the education question. But I do confess to you that if I had been told, and if I believed—and so far believed that I adopted—the policy of tariff reform and scientific taxation; if I believed, as you have been told, that you are hit by tariffs in every part of your body—you are hit in your foreign trade, you are hit in your home trade, agriculture has been practically destroyed, the cotton trade almost, the silk trade has gone, sugar has gone, iron is threatened,—you are like sheep in a field, one by one allowing themselves to be led out to the slaughter;—if I had been a sheep in a field and had been told that if I did not resist this or that policy I would be led out to the slaughter, I would let schools and public-houses do what they like. Should I not be a right-minded sheep? Here are sheep which will rather have their throats cut than surrender a point about schools or about temperance. It is absurd, gentlemen. If a man tells me that my country is going down the hill, that it is going to be not a third-rate, but a fifth-rate Power, and that he has got a remedy which would restore it again to its position as a first-rate Power, it is absurd to tell me that the man who has got his mind imbued with that notion is going to let any other question in the whole world of politics interpose between himself and it.

Mr. Balfour's "Servile Tenure."

I am not going for a moment to enter into an economic argument. We shall have plenty of it in the months that are to come. To-night, what we have to consider is not economic argument. (which is often a polite name for economic fallacies), we have not to consider that; we have got to consider a remarkable political situation. Whether the election takes place within what is called a "reasonable time," which I suppose means about March, or whether it takes place earlier, I do not think much matters. As I said some time ago, the longer they postpone their day of doom the worse will their doom be. But I do say to you seriously it is rather a formidable thing, it is assuredly an unconstitutional thing, to have a set of men in power, able as they may be—some of them are; some are not—openly saying that they are relying upon the favour of the House of Commons, and they are entirely indifferent to any such means of the expression of the public opinion of the country as by-elections or any other openings may afford. I will tell you what I call them—political insolvents. Ah! but the Official Receiver has his eye upon them. Sir Robert Peel, when he had got a great change in fiscal policy to announce, did not take that line, which, with all respect to Mr. Balfour, I must call an ignoble line. I will tell you what Sir Robert Peel said. "I have no desire to be Prime Minister

of England," he said, "but so long as I hold the office of Prime-Minister of England I will hold it by no servile tenure." What a difference between the Minister of England sixty years ago and the Minister to-day!

The Manceuvrings of the Ministerialists.

I think if you will read the speech at the Albert Hall, and if you will read the speech delivered yesterday, and if you could only know, which I don't know, all the perturbations that are going on about something which is called the Black resolution, you would feel that this tenure is indeed a servile tenure. Do they think the country doesn't watch all these manceuvres? I don't myself believe all that the London correspondents of the daily press communicate to their readers—not all of it. I have been a journalist myself—and, gentlemen, it is a very fine profession. But those who write these communications are well aware of all the manceuvrings that are going on. Whilst we are carefully debating serious matters in the House of Commons the country, through these diffusive gentlemen is, more or less accurately, aware of what is going on behind the scenes. Is this the kind of situation in which the Government, the rulers of a great realm, should place themselves? Surely not.

The Education Unsettlement.

Now I leave the political situation, and I will deal with one or two points only which are, I am sure, in your minds. It would be wasting your time if I were to go at length into the schools question—or even into the temperance question—because you have, as I know from your proceedings to-day, made up your minds. You have made up your minds that the so-called settlement of the education question is a most monstrous unsettlement. If Ministers had been provident enough to consult varieties of opinion in England as they were provident in regard to Scotland, the country which does me the honour to send me to Parliament, all this social friction would not have arisen. I do not say for a moment that the question is as simple in England and Wales as it is in Scotland. It is much more complex, for various reasons, which this is not the place to go into, nor am I the person in this place to go into them.

Denominational Teaching or Secular Instruction.

There is a suggestion of a denominational education at the public cost. The Nonconformists do not like that. There is undenominational

religious instruction that the Churchmen, or many of them, do not like, and there are other shades and differences of antagonism. If they do not take care, the end of all this will be that the country will say, "Rather than have the settlement of one of the greatest of national questions impeded by sectarian quarrels and rivalries, we will do as they do in the United States," which is not, after all, a very irreligious community, though it treats any but secular instruction as lying outside the business of the State schools. I gather to-day, from what I heard of the proceedings, that you of this Federation are doubtful whether there shall be integrity of religious instruction, or whether there shall be religious but undenominational instruction, to which the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans object. You have no answer to that problem. The problem is one of profound difficulty. I stand a little aloof—I thirty years ago went along with more important persons than myself for secular instruction. But what I am sure of is that with every desire to be perfectly equitable, to respect the feelings of Church of England men, of Roman Catholics, and of Nonconformists, I do not, as at present advised, see how a compromise upon the lines now popular and now accepted is likely to heal the difficulties which this education policy (so to call it) has evoked and aggravated, and the effect of which has been to land us in an amount of social friction which, I believe, has not often been surpassed since the Reform Bill.

The Licensing Bill.

On temperance you heard my friend, Mr. Whittaker, to-day. If he will allow me to say so in his presence, Mr. Whittaker is a man who more closely argues questions and is more accurate in his statement of facts, so far as we have been able to test him, almost than anybody who has ever undertaken the advocacy of temperance reform. It may be said that what are called fanatics have impeded this question. Gentlemen, neither in this nor in anything else am I a fanatic. But I know a fanatic when I see him. And I know this, that all the great causes, from the abolition of slavery downwards or upwards have been won by fanatics. I sympathise with them. I remember once taking a chair at a meeting even of that ultra-fanatical body, the Alliance, standing where I am standing at this moment. Well, but now it is agreed that there may be some recognition of the equity of the licence-holder to something which is to be called, or not called, compensation. I would not allow that, for my part, and what is much more important, Mr. Whittaker would not allow that, to stand in the way of a settlement. But this Bill is no settlement. For

thirty years great bands of earnest and resolute men in all the churches and all the no-churches, organised and un-organised, have been striving might and main to reduce this giant evil in our midst, and we really hoped that dawn was ripening. There was every sign of dawn.

Total Eclipse.

But dawn, by this Bill, has been transformed into total eclipse. It has put up a great barrier against reduction. In the debates I listened very carefully and with perfect candour to the speeches from the other side and I heard a great deal about the necessity of equity to the trade. I don't dissent from that; but I never heard a word of equity to the public. And I must confess that I was rather sorry to hear the Prime Minister say that after all it was not the publican's fault, that it was the drunkard's fault. Well, I am not saying a word against the publican, but I don't look at it in that way. I don't say whose fault it is, whether it is the publican's or whether it is the drunkard's. I say how are you going to help the helpless? The Government think, because they had a most overwhelming majority last Wednesday, that all is now plain sailing and smooth waters. I think not. There is a stage called Committee, when you consider the details of measures, and this Bill abounds in details upon which I think a very fierce light is likely to beat.

Chinese Labour.

Now I must say a word—I think you will be disappointed if I don't—about Chinese labour. It is said, the Colonial Secretary said, that the Chinese labour question is now dead. Is it? (“No.”) And I was very astonished to see that the Prime Minister said, in this famous speech in which the part of Hamlet was left out, that we were men who recklessly made colonial interests the sport of party. That's very hard language. Are we who now protest against Chinese labour the only people to protest? Why, twelve months ago everybody protested, and when the Cape Colony Assembly passed a resolution against it—when the Australian Assembly passed a resolution against it, were they moved by a spirit of faction? No; they know what Chinese labour is; and they know it so much that I read to-day in your excellent *Manchester Guardian* that at this moment, in Australia, or some portions of Australia, the phrase, which some of us are not entirely unacquainted with, of “pro-Boer” is now taken by the hostile phrase of “pro-Chow.” I think a Minister must have got to his last cartridge when he taxes us with being indifferent to colonial interests. Such talk is no better than claptrap. I will tell you what,

in my view, is at the root of this great feeling—the great tide which ran against Chinese labour, and which I believe is still running and will run. There are two things—first of all, disgust at the thing itself, and, second, disgust and indignation at the exposure which this resort to Chinese labour makes of all the pleas and pretexts that were used for the war.

The Prophecy and the Reality.

I do not know if anybody here to-night was present at an immense meeting in St. James's Hall. It was, I think, in September, 1899—and we were in plenty of time. Then and at other times we warned the country of the mischief they were running into. Were we wrong? I will quote a passage to you from the *Economist* newspaper, which is certainly not a pro-Boer newspaper, or even a Radical newspaper. What do they say? "We looked for prosperity, and we find ruin. We looked for a new colony, which was to be the home of British settlers, and we find a little band of mine-owners bent upon making unprofitable mines pay enough to enable them to get out of them. Why should the utterance of these predictions, which the event has completely falsified, give Lord Milner a title to dictate to the English people?"

A Vigilant Oversight of our Agents Abroad.

It is a fundamental matter, I think, in any rational policy for this country that you should have a Government at home who keep a vigilant eye upon your agents who are on your various frontiers. Take Somaliland for instance. Yesterday we were told that this campaign against the "Mad Mullah"—he is not the maddest of all, I think—cost us £2,370,000. By a curious coincidence, the same afternoon the Secretary of State for India admitted that the "peace mission" to Thibet was now to be advanced to Lhasa, and it is just a month ago since the Prime Minister, when he was challenged with the prospect, or the necessity as it might prove, of annexing this country, used remarkable words. He said: "I contemplate no such unhappy contingency. Let the Tibetans manage their own affairs. Let them keep themselves to themselves." Do you think you are going to let them keep to themselves? We have seen all this many a time before now, and this means new trouble, new outlay, new invasions of the rights of the people who, as he says, have as much right to manage their own affairs in ways best known to themselves as you and I have. That is only an illustration of the perils to which we are exposed by frontier agents when they are not vigilantly watched from home.

Liberals and the Army.

What are the arguments by which it is tried to frighten electors from voting against Protection? It is said, first of all, "Oh, the Liberals cannot be trusted in the matter of the army and of military defence." But when I and my Parliamentary colleagues on this platform remember that only twelve months ago the Ministers had got a grand scheme of military defence which is now pitched overboard, I do not think, if we may take that as a test, that even they are entirely to be trusted. It used to be said years and years ago, I dare say in this hall, against (shall I say?) the greatest member that Manchester ever had—perhaps it may have some other by and by—that he was always for Americanising our institutions. Well, I do not want to Americanise our institutions. I am very well contented with our own institutions and our own Constitution—if it is fairly worked. But there is a thing that is worse than Americanising, and that is Germanising. I would not for the world utter a word of ill-will towards any foreign nation. Foreign nations know their own business as we know ours, and I don't use the word a bit disrespectfully. But their system is different from ours, and I don't want our system to approach theirs. What do I call Germanising? First, the supremacy of the Executive over the representative Legislature. Second, weakening the respect for the House of Commons—and, what is more, weakening the respect of the House of Commons for itself. Third, protection for favoured interests. That I object to. And, fourth, the handing over of military affairs from civil control to soldiers. Gentlemen, I am going to say a word or two by and by on the question of expenditure, and if you Germanise your institutions your expenditure will uncommonly soon become a very reckless affair indeed.

Liberals and Foreign Powers.

One other point in vindication of Liberals. They say that, if the Liberals were to come in, foreign Powers would be tempted to encroach upon the just rights and position of Great Britain. Gentlemen, this is pure moonshine. Foreign Powers know uncommonly well that if you get a dozen Englishmen, Scotsmen, and Welshmen—— (A VOICE: *And Irishmen.*) I shall have something to say on that before I have done. I say—I don't care what their political connections may be—if you get them into the Cabinet, with the responsibility of the honour and security of their country upon their shoulders, foreign Powers know uncommonly well that there is no difference between any dozen Englishmen, Scotsmen, or Welshmen and any others. I would like to know historically whether Great

Britain has ever been more respected in the nations of the world, in the councils of the world, than she was in times when the greatest Liberals of our generation were at the head of it. And I will say a third thing. I don't think that gentlemen who are going to commemorate their fresh advent to power by a tariff all round are very likely to smooth or improve diplomatic relations with foreign Powers.

National Expenditure.

I have named expenditure. It is really the most important of all the questions which can engage the mind of our constituencies at this moment. I think you heard the figures to-day from my friend—who, I believe, is not with us this evening—the new member for Rossendale. They are tremendous—and they are impossible. Expert financiers, and, most of all, those who sit on the other side of the House from us, agree that you cannot go on. As I say, I won't trouble you with figures; but I do want just to point out this to you, that in the seven years beginning 1881-2 (this is on the authority of that excellent Free-trader, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) there was an increase of expenditure annually of half a million. The next seven years these figures crept stealthily up, and you got up to the rate of two and a half millions a year. The next nine years—ending this year while we are standing here—they went up four and a quarter millions a year for nine years. Now, nobody says, none of us would maintain, that Free Trade has given the country proportionate prosperity—nobody says that our wealth has increased in the same proportion as that, from an annual increase of half a million a year in 1881-2 to four and a quarter millions in the year 1904-5.

What Extravagance Means.

Where is this to stop? It is absurd to stand with folded arms in a spirit of languid fatalism and to say, "Where are you to retrench? You cannot retrench." Where there is a will there is a way. Do you remember this, and tell it to all those whom you come near. Yours is, of course, an empire of enormous wealth. The figures of that wealth we do not realise. They are as much beyond our realisation—just as the figures of taxation are—as figures of astronomical distance or geological periods of time. But think what all this means. Do not think that these are mere figures. They mean something tangible in every home in this country. We are a kingdom of enormous wealth, and think how many millions we have in this kingdom of men and women who are decently off

to-day but are overshadowed by the possibility, constantly realising itself, of a morrow when, through ill-health, through bad times, through a shifting in the great currents of national trade, they are thrown down and deprived of the comfort and the decencies to which they have been accustomed. Therefore, do not let anybody dream that it is simply the great merchants, the great bankers, the great insurance agents who ought to reflect upon these figures that Chancellors of the Exchequer give you every year, and to which you pay far too little attention. Think of these figures, and remember that every one of those great imposts means a diminution of comfort and decency in the houses and the families of the people around you. As for old-age pensions, you may whistle for your old-age pensions unless you insist upon retrenchment.

The Irish Question.

Now, before I sit down, one word about Ireland. The supporters of the present Ministry have been making very serious movements lately in favour of cutting down the representation of Ireland in our Imperial Parliament. They say that it is a monstrous anomaly that, judged by standards of population, these colleagues of ours should hold so many seats as they do. Well, but if you are going to base your action upon anomaly, is it not rather an anomaly that every law made for Ireland, every law affecting Ireland, has got to receive the consent of an assembly in which there is not one single representative of the bulk of the Irish nation? I make another observation. Mr. Bright in, I think, the last important speech he made in the House of Commons, in the year 1884, said: "If you reduce the representation of Ireland against the will of the Irish representatives, you are really violating the Act of Union. You altered the terms of the Act of Union when you disestablished the Irish Church, but that was with consent; this is against consent." Third, whether the Irish Nationalists are represented by eighty members or by sixty, I can easily conceive situations in our party politics when sixty members might just as effectively turn the balance between office and ejection from office as eighty. Therefore, do not suppose that by any of these shabby devices you are going to get rid of what is called the Irish spectre. You are not. But now I say frankly that, for my own part, I would not object to the reduction of the Irish members, provided that it was part and parcel of a great national settlement. What settlement? As I think, it would be far safer and far wiser to have a full settlement. And that is a settlement which I, for my part, shall always

advocate as I have for eighteen years past. Whether you have that, or whether you have a settlement which has been called by the name of Administrative Home Rule, in either case I think I am not wrong, I hope that I am right, when I say that when the Liberal party is asked to unsay all that it has been saying with such vehemence, with such fortitude, with such steadfastness and such constancy for all these years—to unsay all these things is what will not be, what cannot be, what ought not to be.

The Forces against Liberalism.

You now know what the situation is. I hope that you are reckoning up and realising the forces that are against you at this election which is coming in a reasonable time. No mere blowing of trumpets will fetch the walls of that Jericho down. Have you realised what you have against you? I am sure you have. Do you know what it means, what effort, what self-sacrifice, to win 150 or 160 seats? This is my final moral—moral is here the right word—we must take all the help that we can get. And as for the notion of rejecting, as I am sorry to see some places are—perhaps for good reasons of their own which I don't know—rejecting a Unionist Free-trader because he has given some votes or made some speeches which are not entirely to their mind, gentlemen, it is suicide. The question for the future is: "Whom is my vote going to place in power?" That is the one question. I put this to Liberals—if you get these gentlemen back to power again on the ground that A. B, C, D, or E has not always voted right about education, temperance, or what not, when you have put them in power, how much education reform, how much temperance reform, how many Bills on land values do you think you will get out of them? Gentlemen, nobody in the world has a greater regard than I have for fidelity to conviction. Yes, but let us have common sense. Let the ship be ballasted. Do not let it go driven hither and thither by every wind of vain doctrine. Let it be ballasted. All depends on our getting everybody in to defeat those men who, as I think—and I am sure most of you think—have with good intentions enough (though they deny us good intentions) betrayed, and are betraying, the best interests of the country.

Liberalism and Labour.

Then as to Labour. There are many disputes about Labour candidates and Liberal candidates. I do not care what a Labour candidate calls himself, when he comes to the House of Commons the Labour man will be a Liberal. And I can only say this, that the more I am in the House of Commons the more do I feel what a justification

is the conduct of the Labour men—the respect, the popularity, the confidence that they have won in the House of Commons, though it is politically a hostile House—the more do I feel how it justifies all of us who, years and years ago, worked and laboured that they should come in. A very remarkable thing, by the way, has taken place. You have all seen, for the first time in modern history, that in Australia a Labour party has been called upon to take the duties and responsibilities of national government. All I would say is, I hope they will take good care—I believe they are of our own stock—that they will carry on those duties and bear those responsibilities with unflinching regard for justice, for toleration, and for all settled rights. They are sure to make blunders, but monarchies, oligarchies, aristocracies, and even democracies in Europe have made blunders. As for our own case, the tactics are plain. Do not let the Labour candidate hold a pistol to the head of the Liberal party. Do not let the Liberal, on the other hand, hold a pistol to the head of the Labour man.

Welcome to Mr. Churchill.

I am glad to think that to-night you have the honour of welcoming a new candidate for Parliament and for the representation of this city. It would ill-become me to use the language of panegyric about Mr. Churchill. But I am bound to say that it is a very significant thing and one very honourable to him. And nobody can know that so well as I who have seen the difficulties of party wrench. They are tremendous. He, and some others who work with him, are entitled to our honour for facing all these terrible—believe me, terrible—wrenches. I hope that you will welcome to-night a man who may carry the lamp when older hands have let it fall.

Our Common Citizenship.

The last word I would say is this, that you must look at these political questions seriously and earnestly. No questions, except those, shall I say, of religion, are more worthy of your most serious and anxious attention. Forget in your best moments the mere cavils of party and remember that we are all—Labour men, politicians, all of us—we are citizens, common citizens of a grand country; we are the heirs of a noble tradition; we believe that human progress can only be won by human effort, and that effort, I hope, all of us in our different degrees, ages, and situations, will pursue with determination, with unselfishness, and with a resolute directness and simplicity that must in the end win a crowning victory.

SPEECH BY MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL, M.P.

MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL, M.P., *moved the following resolution* :—

“That this meeting accords its warmest thanks to the Right Hon. John Morley for his statesmanlike and eloquent speech, and recognises with admiration his high and consistent support of the great principles of peace, retrenchment and reform.”

MR. CHURCHILL *said* : This is not the first time that I have supported Mr. Morley. I supported him at the beginning of the year, when he introduced his amendment into the House of Commons in favour of liberty of trade. I supported him two years ago, when he moved the adjournment of the House in order to discuss the case—I daresay you have forgotten it—of a Mr. Cartwright, and when he was defending, as I then thought and still think, the liberty of the subject. It was my duty to support him then; it is my duty to-night, my duty and my pleasure. It is a pleasure to listen to a speech like that. It is a pleasure personally to me, because Mr. Morley was, I think, almost the only member of the late Liberal Government to whom my father invariably referred—was permitted to refer—as “his right hon. friend.” That is a distinction which I am proud to inherit. Quite apart from any personal feelings, it is perfectly clear to everyone that when Mr. Morley comes at such a time of our fortunes as this into the Free Trade Hall, the Free Trade candidate for the division in which this famous building stands must be there.

Mr. Morley's Speech.

Now you have before you on the paper the resolution which I am charged to move, and I can assure I put it quite honestly to the meeting, because, if I am not letting out a secret, I was allowed to make it up myself. I listened with great interest to the remarkable speech which my right honourable friend has delivered. I welcome that speech as a whole. I welcome his allusion to the need—the urgent need—of retrenchment. I welcome his broad, tolerant, statesmanlike outlook upon the whole arena of political affairs, and I welcome—I was going to say I welcome especially—what he said and what he did not say about the great problem of Ireland. I don't pretend, I should not be honest if I did, that I am able to agree—you would not expect me; he would not expect me—to agree with his views altogether on that question. But I welcome what he said and what he did not say, because I think its object and its intention—and coming from such a man as Mr. Morley above all others—its object is to make it easier for Free-traders of all parties to stand together in the near future in one long line.

For Free Trade Concentration.

For since Mr. Balfour executed what Mr. Morley has charitably called the Sheffield policy, and what I will venture to call the Sheffield shuffle, I have urged, publicly and privately, a Free Trade concentration. Three months ago, as some of you may remember, standing in

this very place, I appealed to the Liberals of Manchester not to make the Tory and Unionist Free-traders sacrifice their political identity, but to take them in virtue of their agreement on the great dividing issue of the day, and trust to everything else coming right in the end. The fact that I stand here to-night is a proof, I think to some extent, that in Manchester, at any rate, that appeal has not gone altogether unregarded. Sir, I recognise the tolerant attitude which the Liberal party have adopted towards the Unionists Free-traders. I appreciate the generosity with which they have cast their ægis over some of those whom Mr. Chamberlain has been driving from their party, and I don't think they will have great cause to regret it. The truth is that Free Trade does not stand alone. It is not an ordinary question, it is a touchstone. People who can agree on Free Trade, on the economic, financial, political, and moral principles which underlie it, cannot fail to find other subjects of agreement.

Wanted a Distinctively Liberal Government.

Our opponents told us last autumn, in a mocking manner, that Free Trade was a shibboleth. There is many a true word spoken in jest. I do not know whether they looked up, before they used that expression, the passage from which it is taken. It is a shibboleth ; and by it you can tell with moral certainty who are the men of Gilead, and who are not. Well, now, ladies and gentlemen, if we are to combine all the available forces, and I think a good many forces are available, in the defence of our Free Trade system there are two dangers which, if you will allow me, I would draw your attention to. The armies of voters who are going to the poll at the next election in favour of Liberalism and Free Trade candidates require to be assured that the Government their votes are going to place in power, should be, to put it plainly, a distinctively Liberal Government, which will administer the complicated and the vast business of State and Empire from their distinctively and characteristically Liberal point of view. We do not want, certainly some of those who have left Mr. Chamberlain's following do not want, to see in power after the next election another Government which will do the same kind of things that this Government has done, only do them perhaps a little better, or, if you like it, a little worse.

What a Liberal Government would do.

We want a Government, I take it, that, for instance, will think a little more about the native toiler at the bottom of the mine and a little less about the fluctuations of the share market in London. We want a Government which, instead of looking mainly abroad, will look mainly, if not, I think, entirely, at home. We want a Government and a policy which will think the condition of a slum in an English city as not less worthy of the attention of statesmen and of Parliament than a jungle in Somaliland. That is the kind of Government we want, and that is the kind of Government which we may be able to obtain. That is the kind of Government which Mr. Chamberlain

says will, "after a brief interval, be hissed off the stage." Well, let us get it first—and then we will show what we will do with the hissing.

Manchester v. Birmingham.

Now, if we know what we want—I am quite surprised I carry such a general measure of agreement—we also are lucky in knowing what we have to fight. The great leader of the Protectionist party, whatever else you may or may not think about him, has at any rate left us in no doubt as to what use he will make of his victory if he should win it. We know perfectly well what to expect—a party of great vested interests, banded together in a formidable confederation; corruption at home, aggression to cover it up abroad; the trickery of tariff juggles, the tyranny of a party machine; sentiment by the bucketful; patriotism by the imperial pint; the open hand at the public exchequer, the open door at the public-house; dear food for the million, cheap labour for the millionaire. That is the policy of Birmingham, and we are going to erect against that policy of Birmingham the policy of Manchester.

For a Positive Policy.

Then they are in another danger which we must not overlook. Free Trade is a condition, as I hold, of progress; it is an aid to progress; it is a herald of progress; but it is not progress. Something more than that is needed. Free Trade is never to be defended by a purely negative policy. It is quite true that the combined influences of free imports and British labour, and natural advantages have produced in this country a much greater accumulation of wealth than is to be seen in those European nations which enjoy all the advantages of a conscriptive army and of scientific tariffs. But it is quite ridiculous, and we shall make ourselves ridiculous if we go about saying, in a world with so much squalor and misery, how happy, how wealthy, how contented, how luxurious we are. We must produce, if we are successfully to defend Free Trade, a positive and practical policy of social reform.

The Great Vested Interests.

Well, what is that policy to be? I am not entitled to advise you upon that—not even though the *Manchester Courier* denounces me as a shocking Radical, not even though the *Times* newspaper says I am almost as bad as Mr. Morley. I think we have heard from him to-night in his broad survey of affairs the outline, at any rate, of a considerable quantity of practical business which requires prompt and immediate settlement. And let me say this. It is very likely that in dealing with great, urgent questions like land, like liquor, like labour you may cause some little excitement and even some little irritation among the great vested interests which are affected by your legislation. We wish to treat everybody with the greatest kindness and with the greatest respect. We do not wish, if we can help it, to hurt a fly, but we have got to make this clear in regard to great and urgent social questions such as I have mentioned, that wherever private privilege

comes into collision with the public interest the public interest must have right of way.

The Necessity of Retrenchment.

Mr. Morley has spoken about the necessity of retrenchment. Ever since I had the honour, not very long ago, of a seat in the House of Commons, from the very first month I have urged and worked and preached in favour of the cause for which Lord Randolph Churchill sacrificed everything. It is very likely that in making the necessary reductions in military establishments which wise economy and prudent policy would dictate, you will find yourself open to a certain amount of abuse. You will be told—perhaps I may say *we* shall be told—I don't in the least mind taking my share—we shall be told that we are traitors, that we are unpatriotic, that we have not learned to think Imperially. Well, don't let us worry too much about that. Don't let us trouble ourselves too much about what the Protectionists may say or may think of us, so long as we are sure, absolutely sure, that, according to our own lights and our own principles, we are doing the thing which is best in the interests and for the honour of our own people in our own land.

The Issues at Stake.

The issues which will be at stake at the next election are not, I think, to be measured by the number of millions you will strike off the wasteful and worthless expenditure of this country, nor are they limited by the exact and precise legislative proposals with which the new Parliament will have to deal. There is something more at stake than that. All through the winter we have listened to a revival of all the stale, old, exploded arguments of Protection ; to all sorts of doctrines and theories about trade and commerce, which it had been hoped in this twentieth century we had cast as far behind as the ancient popular beliefs in magic and witchcraft. That strange experience has produced in many quarters some doubts whether, after all, there is any such thing as real progress in human affairs, whether all the exertions and sacrifices of generations make much difference, whether it is not all a purposeless journeying to and fro, up and down, which leaves us at the end of the day not much further advanced than when we began. I don't blame those doubters—I don't even wonder at their doubts ; but we are here to-night to tell them they are wrong.

A New and Noble Age.

We are here to sweep away those whisperings of despair. We are here to say, as Mr. Birrell said, that we are not going back—we are going on. Our movements are towards a better, fairer organisation of society ; and our faith is strong and high that the time shall surely come—and will come the sooner for our efforts—when the dull, grey clouds under which millions of our countrymen are monotonously toiling, will break and melt and vanish for ever in the sunshine of a new and a noble age.

MR. T. G. HORRIDGE, K.C., Liberal candidate for East Manchester, seconded the resolution. He said he did so with great pleasure for the reason that Mr. Morley was a Lancashire man who had undertaken the task—nobly executed—of writing the life-story of the greatest Lancashire man who ever lived. Another reason was because, if he might use Mr. Morley's own words that night, he was a lover of truth. As to the fiscal question, they knew which side he was on, and the terrible stories of ante-Free-Trade days when the people starved showed that that side was the right one. He urged Free-traders to sink minor differences and to work together in the coming struggle. Then, under the leadership of such statesmen as Mr. Morley, they would win a great and noble victory.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

The Government and the Country.

MR. AUGUSTINE BIRRELL, K.C., moved :—

"That this meeting cordially endorses the resolutions adopted by the Council of the National Liberal Federation at its meetings in Manchester, and pledges itself to help in securing the triumph of Liberal principles by the return of the Liberal party to power whenever the country is next appealed to."

MR. BIRRELL said that until these Federation meetings he had not been in Manchester since that year of disgrace 1900. A very different spirit animated the city then from that which animated it to-day. The working-men of Manchester in 1900 shared the belief, and he would not deny its possible claim to be considered a genuine belief, that the war then being waged was a war made in the interests of labour, to secure to the honest hands that wrought the gold in the Transvaal the best rewards of citizenship, and that those Republics, were they added to our dominions, would be places where the exuberant populations of Lancashire and of Yorkshire might find, by fragrant streams, better accommodation and greater advantages than were to be found by the Mersey or the Irwell. That spirit prevailed in Manchester in 1900. South Africa was to be regenerated, Johannesburg was to become the great capital of wealth and culture, professorships of, he thought, every faculty, except, possibly, political morality, were to be endowed by the millionaire, and we were to see at last a city where all men of energy, of hope, and of desire might find a comfortable home under the flag of freedom. That dream had gone, and there had been a rude awakening. He did not wonder that there was a different spirit in Manchester to-day than there was in 1900, and he congratulated Mr. Winston Churchill and Mr. Horridge and others, that their fortunes fell in happier days than his did. He carried away from Manchester such consolation as he could find in the reflection that it had only done to him what it did to Mr. Gladstone as a Tory and to Mr. Bright as a Radical. He at once set out for Bruges, where he thought he could find consolation

for a bleeding heart. The day after he had been spat upon by the voters of Manchester as a pro-Boer, he was hustled in the streets of Bruges as a tyrannical oppressor of a small republic. Then, for the first time, consolation entered his soul, and he said, "If I have been spat upon and hustled within forty-eight hours by two mobs I am certain to be right." The spirit that animated that meeting convinced him that Manchester had changed its mind, and after the speech they had heard from Mr. Churchill, he was sure he might congratulate them that they would have here in their midst a representative powerful in expression, honest in conviction, and with those forward-reaching thoughts which alone made politics endurable.

SIR JOHN T. BRUNNER, Bart., M.P., seconded the resolution. He welcomed the recommendation by Mr. Churchill of a positive policy as opposed to Mr. Chamberlain, instead of a merely negative policy. His heart went out to Mr. Churchill when he said we should think more of an English slum than of a Somaliland jungle. He was sick of the squandering of our money in all the ends of the earth, and more convinced than ever he was in his life that the fool had his eyes there. He welcomed their new recruit, who could tell them that for months he had himself been preaching the doctrine that it was unwise for his fellow-countrymen simply to be saying "No" to Mr. Chamberlain. The Liberal principles for the triumph of which they declared their wishes were adapted, not for interests, not for sections, but for the benefit of every man, woman, and child in the whole realm.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

Vote of Thanks to the Chairman.

MR. MORLEY said: I have first of all to thank you for the great cordiality with which you received the vote of thanks proposed to me by Mr. Churchill. I think you will all agree that Mr. Churchill's speech was a most remarkable performance, and you will all hope, as I do, that it is the first speech in his new career, in a career with new allies and new friends, which I venture to predict will be a remarkable career, and there is every promise of good for all the causes and the principles which we care about. I have to propose a vote of thanks to Mr. Schwann for his kindness in taking the chair. He has not had a very difficult task, but that task he has performed with his usual skill, with the skill that practice has given him. I am glad to think that you have had a magnificent Federation meeting—probably, as I understand, the most satisfactory of all the meetings which the Federation has had.

MR. A. A. HAWORTH (prospective Liberal candidate for South Manchester) seconded the resolution, and it was carried with great cheering.

Breakfast to Liberal Secretaries and Agents.

On Saturday morning, May 14th, the Liberal Secretaries and Agents attending the Manchester meetings were entertained at breakfast at the Midland Hotel on the invitation of Mr. Herbert Gladstone, M.P., the Chief Liberal Whip, and Mr. Birrell, the President of the National Liberal Federation.

MR. HERBERT GLADSTONE, M.P. : I much regret that Mr. Morley is not with us this morning, but after his exertions last night he had to leave early for London, and he asked me to express to you his great regret at not being here. (*After speaking of registration work, Mr. Gladstone proceeded.*) At the last General Election some 150 seats were uncontested by the Liberals. That will not be the case at the next election. Now, it is often said, perhaps naturally, that while we are doing very well in the country, we are not doing so well in the House of Commons. The impatience is natural—I would say virtuous. I can quite understand it, but I sometimes wish that these critics outside the House of Commons would also understand the position within it, if they could. Sometimes, I know, it is very difficult. We all agree that we must use every effort to check those whom Mr. Morley rightly called “political insolvents,” but look at it coolly and you must remember that the task is not an easy one. Even crediting the Liberal Opposition with the whole strength of 83 Nationalists, there still remains a working majority for the Government of no less than 100, and unfortunately we cannot always rely upon our Irish friends to be with us. There are differences of opinion on more than one great question. I regret it, but I cast not blame; it is no use kicking against the pricks. The Irishmen have their own policy to pursue, and are entitled to decide on their own methods in the House of Commons, and if the Irish vote with us against the common enemy we are very glad. But there is another thing. Undoubtedly the Liberal front bench is extremely weak in numbers. The Government have no less than eleven Cabinet Ministers on their bench in the House of Commons—not all of them good for much—but still they have all the position and status and dignity of Cabinet Ministers. Now, on our side, unfortunately, Sir William Harcourt, after a long and splendid career, is practically retiring into private life. Apart from him we have only five who, as ex-Cabinet Ministers, can claim something like a corresponding dignity and position to those opposite. Remember what falls on these five. They are supposed always to be in the House of Commons, they have to do a great deal of speaking in the country, and they would do a great deal more if I allowed them, and they have to discharge all the various functionary duties which

always unfortunately fall on the shoulders of leaders of parties. The Opposition has been practically in the shade for nine years. It has had two disastrous elections. Though a growing number it is not 200 in the House of Commons—and the numerical weakness is great and undoubted. Now when people say, "You ought to turn out the Government, and you ought to have done it by now," I would ask them to remember what has been done in times past by Liberal Oppositions against Tory majorities. In 1874 the Conservative Government had a majority of fifty, and they lasted for six years. Did the Liberal party in those years neglect its duties? Were the Liberal leaders then slack or casual in the discharge of their duties? Were they incapable? Ought they to have turned that Government out sooner? The fact remains that they did not, although their advantages in that respect were infinitely greater than those that are at our service at the present time, and therefore, while I do not in the least complain of any feeling of disappointment that we have not done better than we have done, I ask you to remember the circumstances of the case and the great difficulties attaching to them. We shall do our best, you may depend upon that; and this I would say to all here, without hesitation and without fear, that while I do not pretend to say we might not do better—what man can say that?—yet I will say this, that the present Opposition has worked harder and has a better record of work in speeches and in divisions, and in work throughout the country, than any Liberal Opposition in the last century. There is this remarkable fact which tells in our favour. The election in 1900 was almost as disastrous, if not quite, as the previous general election was, but within two years of that election and its disastrous consequences the Liberal party was once more a great and effective fighting force in the country, and if another election had come in two years' time from September, 1900, we should have been able to give a most excellent account of ourselves. I do not know that any political party ever recovered itself in the country so quickly as the Liberal party did subsequent to the election in 1900. It is important to remember that fact, because it is frequently said it was Mr. Chamberlain's fiscal speech and his fiscal campaign which first gave new strength to the Liberal party. We all know, those who have been in the fight, that is not the fact. Mr. Chamberlain has certainly strengthened our sinews, but it was the Education Act which roused Liberals throughout the country and in the first instance restored their unity and made them a great fighting force in the country. Now Mr. Morley said yesterday, speaking as to the Unionist Free-traders, that we ought to get all the help we can, and I agree with him. Our position relatively with the Free-traders is not a very easy one, and the fact I have already mentioned, that constituencies were so stimulated by the Education Act that they at once proceeded to select candidates all over the country—that fact has greatly increased our difficulty in dealing with the Unionist Free-traders. All over the country we have candidates in the field who have been fighting in their constituencies and spending time and money, and naturally it is

difficult for those gentlemen to withdraw ; and it is, I think I may say, still more difficult to persuade, if one wanted to persuade or tried to persuade, the constituencies—the electors in the constituencies which those gentlemen are fighting—to allow them to withdraw. But for all that I say I think Mr. Morley was quite right, and that it is the duty and the interest of the Liberal party to give all the assistance in their power to the Unionist Free-traders who have broken away from their party on a great question of principle. Now, they recognise, as we recognise, that if they expect co-operation from us they on their part must advance also, quite apart from the fiscal question, and I think you will probably agree with me in saying that if Unionist Free-traders see their way to approach us, to come up to our position, our general position—I won't put it higher than that—on the education question, on temperance, and on those great social questions to which Mr. Winston Churchill in his brilliant speech referred, then surely there ought to be no difficulty on our part to do all that we can, not only to protect them from their Protectionist enemy but to welcome them over to our side. I am glad to say that several constituencies have set a good example—Cardiff, Scarborough, Whitby, Durham, Wiltshire, and, not the least of all, Manchester—and I hope there will be others. Be this as it may, I am confident the Free-traders themselves realise that the Liberal party recognise the honourable position, the patriotic position, which they have taken up, and though it is conscious of its own difficulties in dealing with them so far as finding them political seats is concerned, yet we on our part will do all in our power to assist them in their position. The dissolution may be in a year or it may be earlier. We shall be ready whenever it comes. We are told that after that dissolution there will be the brief, inglorious career of a Liberal Government, and that then the Liberal Government will be hissed off the stage. Mr. Chamberlain once more deals in prophecy. I have often heard of plays, both good and bad, hissed when first put on the stage, but I have never heard of anybody hissing a play off the stage which has not been put on it. And, you know, Mr. Balfour says we have no creed. If that is true, on what ground does Mr. Chamberlain say that our creed when it appears will be hissed off the stage? Whether those who hiss are men or geese, we shall be ready to face the facts when they arise, and you may depend upon it that the Liberal party has not neglected the somewhat painful lessons of the last fifteen or twenty years. For my part, I believe they will, when the election comes, not only show, to Mr. Winston Churchill's satisfaction, a great social programme which they mean to fulfil, but that they will be returned by a working majority which will enable them to fulfil it, if not entirely, at least in a great measure. Meanwhile, Mr. Chamberlain, who speaks so loudly, will not face the music. He still lingers behind Mr. Balfour's skirts. But he repeats the old fallacies, he gives us some new figures which Mr. Hewins has been preparing for him in his absence, and some tourist gossip of his own. The old case of the colonial offer is trotted out. The melancholy vision of national decline is once more presented to us in the very teeth of the cheery

optimism of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Chamberlain won't appeal to the country. Though he tells us the present system is ruinous, that our trade is going to the dogs, that we are declining as other countries rise up on our downfall, yet he won't go to the country. Why does he hesitate? It is a tribute to his own weakness and to our strength. Enthusiasm, he says, wins an election, not timidity. Why does he not set the example? Why is there no enthusiasm? Why so much timidity? He challenged us last year. We picked up the glove, and now he won't fight. Well, how long this fit of abstract and prudent enthusiasm may last I do not know; but whether it is long or whether it is short, the important thing for us is to go on strengthening and improving our position, and the only practical bit of advice which I have to insist upon on the present occasion is this, that you should not rest on your oars. Remember there is a current, and remember that if you rest on your oars you are certain to go down stream. Therefore I say do not rest on your oars; keep on rowing, maintain your progress, continue your preparations, and if you do I say with confidence that at the General Election, whether it comes in 1904 or 1905, the Liberal party will achieve a record victory such as has not been seen for a hundred years.

Mr. BIRRELL said he entirely echoed everything Mr. Gladstone had said about the really wonderful way in which their great party after the disastrous election of 1900 immediately recovered itself. He did not think anything like it had ever yet been seen in the history of the party. They were supposed to be discomfited and disgraced, if not annihilated, but within a very few months the spirit of Liberalism revived in every part of the country, and before many months were over that party which was supposed to be annihilated was in a position, had the election taken place then, to fight and in many places to achieve great victories. Well, if that was so within a few months of the election of 1900 were they not justified in believing the position to be very different to-day? They felt themselves, and were entitled to do so, to be in reality the dominant party in the State, and if anybody challenged that statement let him bring it to an issue. They were prepared to fight to-morrow. (*"No, no."*) Yes, what he had said he had said. The better the day, the better the deed. He could imagine no better work for a Sunday morning than to turn out the present Government. Let them postpone the fight, however, if they liked, to that day week. Then they would be prepared with their answer. He expressed the hope that when the General Election came there would not be one Government candidate returned without a contest. He hoped that in every case the electors would have an opportunity of registering a Liberal vote at what would be the most remarkable election of modern times.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Herbert Gladstone and Mr. Birrell, proposed by Mr. F. Nash and seconded by Mr. J. H. Linforth, was carried by acclamation, and the proceedings terminated.

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NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION.

PROCEEDINGS

IN CONNECTION WITH THE

TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION,

HELD IN NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE,

MAY 18th, 19th, and 20th, 1903,

WITH

The Annual Report and the Speeches,

INCLUDING THOSE DELIVERED BY

THE RIGHT HON.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN,

G.C.B., M.P.

1905.

THE LIBERAL PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT,

42, PARLIAMENT STREET, LONDON, S.W.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
1.—Summary of the Proceedings	4
2.—Twenty-Seventh Annual Report... ..	9
3.—First Session of the Council	39
Adoption of the Report and Presidential Address	40
Election of President and Treasurer	43
The Political Situation	44
Free Trade	48
Labour and the Unemployed	51
4.—Second Session of the Council	54
Licensing Reform	54
Education	59
Land Law Reform	64
Electoral Reform and House of Lords	65
Women's Disabilities	66
Vote of Thanks to Newcastle Liberals	66
5.—Public Meeting in Palace Theatre	68
Chairman's Address... ..	68
Speech by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman	69
Thanks to Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman—Liberal Policy	82
Thanks to the Chairman	82
6.—Overflow Meeting in Olympia	83
7.—Breakfast to Liberal Secretaries and Agents	86
8.—Other Meetings	87

NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION.

PRESIDENT :

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL, K.C.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE :

EDWARD EVANS.

(President of the Liverpool Liberal Federal Council.)

TREASURER :

JOHN MASSIE.

(Vice-President of the Oxford Liberal Association.)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE :

*Elected at the Annual Meeting of the General Committee at Crewe,
March 1st, 1905.)*

AGLAND, FRANCIS D. (Richmond Division of Yorkshire).
ADKINS, W. RYLAND D. (Chairman of the Mid-Northamptonshire Liberal Assn.).
ANGUS, WILLIAM (President of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal Association).
BARRAN, ALFRED (Vice-President of the North Leeds Liberal Association).
BIRD, ROBERT (Vice-President of the Cardiff Liberal Association).
BRUNNER, J. F. L. (Cheshire Liberal Federal Council).
BUNTING, P. W. (Vice-President of the South St. Pancras Liberal Association).
BURGESS, A. H. (Hon. Sec. of the Harborough Division [Leicestershire] Lib. Assn.).
DAVIES, W. HOWELL (President of the South Bristol Liberal Association).
DICKINSON, W. H. (Chairman of the London Liberal Federation).
FULLERTON, HUGH (Vice-President of the Egremont Division [Cumberland] Lib. Assn.).
ILLINGWORTH, PERCY H. (Shipley Division of Yorkshire).
LEHMANN, R. C. (South Bucks Liberal Association).
LEVESON-GOWER, GEORGE (Home Counties Division of the National Liberal Fedn.).
MACDONALD, J. A. MURRAY (President of the Bow and Bromley Liberal Association).
NUTTALL, HARRY (Vice-President of the Stretford Division [Lancashire] Lib. Assn.).
RADFORD, CHARLES H. (President of the Plymouth Liberal Association).
ROWNTREE, ARNOLD S. (President of the York Liberal Association).
WATSON, DR. ROBERT SPENCE (Ex-President of the National Liberal Federation).
WRIGHT, FRANK (President of the Birmingham Liberal Association).

SECRETARY :

ROBT. A. HUDSON.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY :

FRANK BARTER.

OFFICES :

42, PARLIAMENT STREET, LONDON, S.W.

(Telegrams : "Liberalize," London. Telephone : 3172 Gerrard.)

PROCEEDINGS
AT THE
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
OF THE
NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION
HELD AT THE
TOWN HALL, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE,
THURSDAY and FRIDAY, MAY 18th and 19th, 1905.

FIRST SESSION.

THURSDAY, MAY 18TH. 2 P.M.

REPORT AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS.

Moved by Mr. BIRRELL (President of the Federation); seconded by Sir JAMES JOICEY, Bart., M.P. (Durham—Chester-le-Street Division); and resolved:—

“That the Report and Statement of Accounts be received and adopted.”

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND TREASURER.

Moved by Mr. WILLIAM ANGUS (President of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal Association); seconded by Mr. THOMAS CAIRNS (Prospective Liberal Candidate for Newcastle-on-Tyne); and resolved:—

“That Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C., be re-elected President, and that Mr. John Massie be re-elected Treasurer for the ensuing year.”

THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

Moved by Mr. THOMAS BURT, M.P. (Morpeth); seconded by Mr. ELLIS J. GRIFFITH, M.P. (Anglesey); supported by Mr. J. A. PEASE, M.P. (Essex—Saffron Walden Division); and resolved:—

“That this Council records its hearty and unabated confidence in Lord Spencer and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and their colleagues in the two Houses of Parliament, and calls upon Ministers to submit themselves to the judgment of the constituencies instead of clinging to office in face of the Country's clearly expressed condemnation of their record and policy.”

FREE TRADE.

Moved by Sir CHRISTOPHER FURNESS, M.P. (Hartlepool); seconded by Mr. REGINALD MCKENNA, M.P. (Monmouthshire—Northern Division); and resolved:—

“That this Council, convinced of the benefits which have accrued to this country through its adoption of Free Trade as the national policy, affirms its unwavering determination to resist all proposals to depart from that policy, since, whether presented under the guise of Tariff Reform, Retaliation, Preferential Trade, or Protection, they must inevitably raise the price of food and raw materials, diminish trade, involve us in a war of tariffs, endanger our relations with the Colonies, and threaten the stability of the Empire.”

LABOUR AND THE UNEMPLOYED.

Moved by Mr. CHARLES FENWICK, M.P. (Northumberland—Wansbeck Division); seconded by Mr. W. H. LEVER (Chairman of the Wirral [Cheshire] Liberal Association); and resolved:—

“That this Council is strongly of opinion that immediate steps should be taken to restore to workmen the right of effective combination of which they have recently been deprived by decisions of the Courts.

“This Council is also of opinion that the State should create permanent machinery applicable to the whole country for investigating and alleviating the lack of employment caused from time to time by exceptional trade depression.”

SECOND SESSION.

FRIDAY, MAY 19TH. 10.30 A.M.

LICENSING REFORM.

Moved by THE RIGHT HON. R. B. HALDANE, K.C., M.P. (Haddingtonshire); seconded by Mr. T. P. WHITTAKER, M.P. (Yorkshire—Spenn Valley Division); and resolved:—

“That this Council strongly condemns the Licensing Act of 1904 as placing new and serious obstacles in the way of Temperance Reform, and declares that the measure should at the first practicable moment be amended, so as to secure (amongst other things) a time limit to the compensation clause, and the restoration of the right to refuse licences and impose conditions to a local Licensing authority invested with enlarged powers.”

EDUCATION.

Moved by Mr. JOHN MASSIE (Treasurer of the National Liberal Federation); seconded by Mr. FRANCIS D. ACLAND (Prospective Liberal Candidate for the Richmond Division of Yorkshire); and resolved :—

“That this Council, re-affirming its previous declarations on the Education question, declares that no settlement can be permanent or satisfactory which does not secure a national system of Education based on effective popular control and management, and freed from religious tests and sectarian influences.

LAND LAW REFORM.

Moved by Mr. GEORGE LAMBERT, M.P. (Devonshire—South Molton Division); seconded by Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL, M.P. (Yorkshire—Cleveland Division); and resolved :—

“That this Council regards a right settlement of the questions of ownership, transfer, tenure, and taxation of land as the indispensable condition of any satisfactory scheme of social reform, and in particular as essential to the proper treatment of the growing evils of overcrowding in towns and depopulation of the rural districts, and, while not seeking to enumerate all the reforms which may eventually be proved necessary, this Council considers that the following proposals should receive the immediate attention of Parliament :—

- “(1) That a tax be levied on Land Values so as to give the community a share in the monopoly value of land, bring building sites into the market, relieve rates, and lighten the burdens on industry.
- “(2) That the Agricultural Holdings Acts of 1883 and 1900 be so amended as to secure to the tenant-farmer a statutory right to carry out all improvements suitable to his holding and necessary for its proper working, and to obtain compensation for capricious disturbance, and that disputed questions relating to improvements and compensation for improvements or for disturbance be referred to judicial arbitrators.
- “(3) That larger and freer powers be given to local authorities and under certain conditions to societies and individuals, to acquire or hire land for letting in Small Holdings and for the provision of better housing accommodation for the working classes.”

ELECTORAL REFORM AND HOUSE OF LORDS.

Moved by Dr. T. J. MACNAMARA, M.P. (Camberwell—North); seconded by Mr. JOHN M. ROBERTSON (Prospective Liberal Candidate for the Tyneside Division of Northumberland), and resolved :—

“That this Council re-affirms its conviction that in order to make Parliament really representative—

“(1) The House of Commons must be elected on a broadened and simplified Franchise, with no elector voting more than once;

“(2) The conditions of Election to, and Membership of, the House of Commons must be so altered as not in effect to exclude from Parliament the less wealthy classes of the community; and

“(3) The House of Lords must be deprived of its power to mutilate or reject legislative measures which have passed through all their stages in the representative Chamber.”

WOMEN'S DISABILITIES.

Moved by Mr. LEIF JONES, M.P. (Westmoreland—Appleby Division); seconded by Mr. P. W. BUNTING (Vice-President of the South St. Pancras Liberal Association), and resolved :—

“That in the opinion of this Council the disabilities at present attaching to women by reason of sex, in the matters of the Parliamentary suffrage and of election to local bodies, should be removed.”

VOTE OF THANKS TO NEWCASTLE LIBERALS.

Moved by Mr. EDWARD EVANS (Chairman of Committee, National Liberal Federation); seconded by the Right Hon. the EARL OF ABERDEEN, G.C.M.G., and resolved :—

“That the best thanks of this Council be tendered to the President of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal Association and his colleagues, and to the Officers and Members of the Reception Committee for their excellent arrangements in connection with the visit of the Federation to Newcastle, also to Mr. Thomas Cairns and Mrs. Cairns, and to the right Worshipful the Mayor (Mr. Alderman J. Baxter Ellis) and the Mayoress, and the officers and Committee of the Liberal Club for their generous hospitality.”

PUBLIC MEETING

HELD IN THE

PALACE THEATRE, PERCY STREET,

FRIDAY EVENING, MAY 19th, 1905.

Mr. William Angus, J.P. (President of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal and Radical Association), in the Chair.

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.

SPEECH BY

The Right Hon. Sir HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN,
G.C.B., M.P.

THANKS TO SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN AND; CONFIDENCE IN LIBERAL PRINCIPLES.

Moved by Mr. AUGUSTINE BIRRELL, K.C. (President of the National Liberal Federation); seconded by Mr. W. S. ROBSON, K.C., M.P.; and resolved :—

“That this meeting accords its warmest thanks to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman for his presence and speech to-night, assures him and his colleagues of the loyal confidence of the Liberal Party, endorses the resolutions adopted by the Council of the National Liberal Federation at its meetings in Newcastle-on-Tyne, and pledges itself to help in securing the triumph of Liberal principles by the return of the Liberal Party to power whenever the present Government has the courage to submit itself to the judgment of the constituencies.”

THANKS TO THE CHAIRMAN.

Moved by THE EARL OF ABERDEEN; seconded by Mr. THOMAS CAIRNS (Prospective Liberal Candidate for Newcastle-on-Tyne); and resolved :—

“That this meeting expresses its best thanks to the President of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal and Radical Association for his conduct in the Chair.”

NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

INTRODUCTORY.

At home the Fiscal question has continued to be the dominating controversy in the past year. Thanks to the strenuous efforts of the Liberal Party, aided by the Labour leaders and the Free Trade Unionists, the nostrums of Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Balfour, with which they had hoped to beguile the country into a return to Protection, have been explained and exposed, and the danger of their proposals is becoming every day more fully appreciated by the nation.

The war in the Far East, which, unhappily, shows no sign of immediate ending, has involved Powers other than the combatants in situations of delicacy and even peril. Public opinion in this country has at times been excited by action on the part of Russia, but, thanks to the good sense and feeling shown by both nations, the crises have all been peacefully surmounted. Every lover of peace must rejoice that the North Sea incident, in which British fishermen lost their lives as the result of firing by Russian warships, was settled by reference to arbitration under the provisions of the Hague Convention.

The Anglo-French Agreement has been formally ratified, and there has been a very welcome growth in the spirit of neighbourly friendliness which alone made the Agreement possible.

The Macedonian question is still unsettled, though the non-success of the Austro-Russian scheme of reform is already beyond dispute. It is much to be hoped that Great Britain will make effectual use of the free hand in the initiation of reforms which she expressly reserved when agreeing that the scheme should be given a trial.

TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING.

The Twenty-sixth Annual Meeting of the Federation was held at Manchester on May 12th and 13th, 1904.

FIRST SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

THURSDAY, MAY 12TH, 1904.

The First Session of the Council was held in the Midland Hall on the afternoon of Thursday, May 12th, Mr. Augustine Birrell presiding.

The adoption of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts was moved by the President, seconded by Mr. Robert Bird (Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Federation), and carried unanimously.

It was moved by Mr. C. E. Schwann, M.P. (President of the Manchester Liberal Federation), seconded by Mr. J. Emmott Barlow, M.P. (Chairman of the Manchester Reform Club), and unanimously resolved:—

“That Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C., be re-elected President, and that Dr. John Massie be re-elected Treasurer for the ensuing year.”

It was moved by the President, seconded by Mr. F. Cawley, M.P. (Lancashire—Prestwich Division), and unanimously resolved:—

“That this Council learns with deep regret of the impending withdrawal from the House of Commons of Sir William Harcourt. It places on record its grateful appreciation of the long and eminent services which he has rendered to the country, and expresses its earnest hope that he may live long to give his powerful aid towards the accomplishment of many of those reforms which he has helped so much to promote, and which the Liberal Party stands resolutely pledged to carry into effect.”

It was moved by Mr. Hilaire Belloc (Prospective Liberal Candidate for South Salford), seconded by Sir John Brunner, Bart., M.P. (Cheshire—Northwich Division), and unanimously resolved:—

“That this Council records its hearty and unabated confidence in Lord Spencer and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and their colleagues in the two Houses of Parliament, and, being satisfied by the clear evidence of the by-elections and other unmistakable

signs that Mr. Balfour's present Administration, far from representing the opinion of the Country, has incurred the contempt of men of all shades of political opinion, calls upon the Government to submit itself to the judgment of the constituencies at the earliest possible moment."

It was moved by Sir W. H. Holland, M.P. (Yorkshire—Rotherham Division), seconded by Mr. Reginald McKenna, M.P. (North Monmouth), and unanimously resolved:—

"That this Council, whilst reiterating its former declarations upon the revolution in our Fiscal Policy proposed by Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain, recognises that the course of recent events has shown that the preservation of the Country from the evils of Protection and the taxation of food depends mainly upon the determined and organised opposition of the Liberal Party, and calls upon all who are alive to these dangers to join in saving the country from them."

It was moved by Mr. F. S. Stevenson, M.P. (Suffolk—Eye Division), seconded by Mr. Henry Vivian (Prospective Liberal Candidate for Birkenhead), and unanimously resolved:—

"That this Council again calls attention to the urgent necessity of Social Reform, particularly in connection with the Housing Question, the reform of the Land Laws, the Equality of Rating, and kindred matters, and once more records its opinion that Land Values should be taxed so as to contribute their fair share towards the ever-increasing cost of local administration."

SECOND SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

FRIDAY, MAY 13TH.

The Second Session of the Council was held in the Midland Hall, on the morning of Friday, May 13th, Mr. Augustine Birrell (President of the Federation) in the chair.

It was moved by Dr. John Massie (Treasurer of the National Liberal Federation), seconded by Mr. F. D. Acland (Prospective Liberal Candidate for the Richmond Division of Yorkshire), and unanimously resolved:—

"That this Council is convinced that no satisfactory settlement of the Education Question can be obtained from the present Government, and that no settlement can be accepted that does not secure for the country a national system of Education based on popular control and management, and freed from religious tests and sectarian influences."

It was moved by Mr. L. V. Harcourt, M.P. (Lancashire—Rossendale Division), seconded by Mr. A. E. W. Mason (Prospective Liberal Candidate for Coventry), and unanimously resolved:—

“That this Council views with alarm the enormous growth of the ordinary yearly expenditure of the nation due to the long predominance of the Tory Party, and declares such expenditure to be uncalled for by national necessities. In particular the Council protests against the extravagance of the amounts now spent upon armaments, and against the loss of life and waste of money involved in needless and aggressive expeditions such as those in Somaliland and Tibet.”

It was moved by Mr. T. P. Whittaker, M.P. (Yorkshire—Spenn Valley Division), seconded by Dr. A. P. Thomas (Prospective Liberal Candidate for the Bootle Division of Lancashire), and unanimously resolved:—

“That this Council strongly condemns the Government Licensing Bill, since it interferes with the discretion of the Magistrates, does nothing to popularise the constitution of the Licensing Authority, and by creating for the first time a vested interest in a licence places new and serious obstacles in the way of Temperance Reform.”

It was moved by Mr. Charles Fenwick, M.P. (Northumberland—Wansbeck Division), seconded by Mr. Ellis J. Griffith, M.P. (Anglesey), and unanimously resolved:—

“That this Council protests against the Ordinance permitting the introduction of indentured Chinese Labour into the Transvaal, and, whilst challenging the statement that cheap foreign labour is a commercial necessity, places on record its conviction that the proposal is inconsistent with the Common Law of England, destructive of the love of liberty, inimical to the true interests of South Africa, and likely to weaken the bond of union between the several portions of the Empire.”

It was moved by Mr. Edward Evans (Chairman of Committee of the Federation), and carried by acclamation:—

“That the best thanks of this Council be tendered to the President of the Manchester Liberal Federation and his colleagues, and to the Officers and Members of the Reception Committee for their excellent arrangements in connection with the visit of the Federation to Manchester, also to Mr. Charles E. Schwann, M.P., and Mrs. Schwann, and to Mr. J. Emmott Barlow, M.P., President of the Reform Club, and the Committee of the Club for their generous hospitality.”

Mr. William Royle (Chairman of the Manchester Liberal Federation) responded, and the meeting ended.

On the same evening a great Public Meeting was held in the Free Trade Hall. The capacious building was filled with a most representative gathering, including the majority of delegates who had attended the two Sessions of the Federation Council.

Mr. Charles E. Schwann, M.P. (President of the Manchester Liberal Federation), occupied the chair.

Mr. John Morley, who received a most enthusiastic welcome, addressed the meeting, and the following resolution, which was moved by Mr. Winston Churchill, M.P., and seconded by Mr. T. G. Horridge, K.C. (Prospective Liberal Candidate for East Manchester), was carried by acclamation:—

“That this meeting accords its warmest thanks to the Right Hon. John Morley for his statesmanlike and eloquent speech, and recognises with admiration his high and consistent support of the great principles of Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform.”

It was moved by Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C. (President of the National Liberal Federation), seconded by Sir John T. Brunner, Bart., M.P., and unanimously resolved:—

“That this meeting cordially endorses the resolutions adopted by the Council of the National Liberal Federation at its meetings in Manchester, and pledges itself to help in securing the triumph of Liberal principles by the return of the Liberal Party to power whenever the country is next appealed to.”

A hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman, moved by Mr. Morley, and seconded by Mr. A. A. Haworth (Prospective Liberal Candidate for South Manchester), brought the great meeting to a close.

In connection with the visit of the Federation to Manchester a Reception was given in the Midland Hall on May 12th, by Mr. Charles E. Schwann, M.P. (President of the Manchester Liberal Federation), and Mrs. Schwann, to the Members of Parliament, Delegates, and other representative Liberals attending the meetings.

THE GENERAL COMMITTEE.

The Annual Business Meeting of the General Committee was held at Crewe on March 1st. The Chair was, in the first instance, taken by Mr. Augustine Birrell. Mr. Edward Evans was—for the tenth time—unanimously elected Chairman of Committee, on the motion of Mr. James Tomkinson, M.P. (Cheshire—Crewe Division), seconded by Mr. Charles H. Radford (President of the Plymouth Liberal Association).

Mr. Evans having assumed the Chair and returned thanks for his re-election, the delegates proceeded to the election of the Executive Committee, the following twenty gentlemen being elected:—

	VOTES
DR. ROBERT SPENCE WATSON (Ex-President of the National Liberal Federation) - - - - -	285
MR. FRANCIS DYKE ACLAND (Richmond Division of Yorkshire)	268
MR. J. F. L. BRUNNER (Cheshire Liberal Federal Council) -	259
MR. ARNOLD S. ROWNTREE (President of the York Liberal Association) - - - - -	254
MR. W. H. DICKINSON (Chairman of the London Liberal Federation) - - - - -	250
MR. ROBERT BIRD (Vice-President of the Cardiff Liberal Association) - - - - -	243
MR. PERCY H. ILLINGWORTH (Shipley Division of Yorkshire)	240
MR. WILLIAM ANGUS (President of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal and Radical Association) - - - - -	239
MR. HUGH FULLERTON (Vice-President of the Egremont Division [Cumberland] Liberal Association) - - - - -	235
MR. GEORGE LEVESON-GOWER (Home Counties Division of the National Liberal Federation) - - - - -	232
MR. FRANK WRIGHT (President of the Birmingham Liberal Association) - - - - -	230
MR. W. RYLAND D. ADKINS (Chairman of the Mid-Northamptonshire Liberal Association) - - - - -	219
MR. J. A. MURRAY MACDONALD (President of the Bow and Bromley Liberal and Radical Association) - - -	219
MR. R. C. LEHMANN (South Bucks Liberal Association) - -	218
MR. W. HOWELL DAVIES (President of the South Bristol Liberal Association) - - - - -	216

	VOTES.
MR. HARRY NUTTALL (Vice-President of the Stretford Division [Lancs.] Liberal Association) - - - - -	214
MR. ALFRED BARRAN (Vice-President of the North Leeds Liberal Association) - - - - -	213
MR. CHARLES H. RADFORD (President of the Plymouth Liberal Association) - - - - -	210
MR. P. W. BUNTING (Vice-President of the South St. Pancras Liberal Association) - - - - -	207
MR. A. H. BURGESS (Hon. Secretary of the Harborough Division [Leicestershire] Liberal Association) - - -	206

Not Elected.

- MR. GODFREY BARING (Vice-President of the Isle of Wight Liberal Association).
 MR. ERNEST W. ENFIELD (President of the Rushcliffe Division [Notts] Liberal Association).
 MR. EDWARD G. HEMMERDE (Vice-President of the Shrewsbury Liberal Association).

Of the twenty members elected as above, Mr. W. Angus and Mr. H. Nuttall are elected for the first time, whilst Mr. Ryland Adkins returns to the Committee after an absence of a year. Mr. George Leveson-Gower was co-opted by the Committee (under Rule V.) in October, 1904, to fill a vacancy caused by the resignation of Sir Arthur S. Wells, Bart., by reason of his having left England for a prolonged foreign tour.

Mr. E. T. Ann and Mr. H. G. Whibley were not eligible for re-election under the retirement clause of the Federation Rules, and Mr. J. E. Willans (Huddersfield) felt compelled, by pressure of other public engagements, to resign his seat on the Executive, much to the regret of his colleagues.

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COUNTRY.

The following resolution, submitted by the Executive Committee, was moved by Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C. (President of the National Liberal Federation), seconded by Sir John T. Brunner, Bart., M.P. (President of the Cheshire Liberal Federal Council), supported by the Right Hon. the Earl of Crewe, K.P., Mr. Fred Horne (Prospective Liberal Candidate for Shropshire—Ludlow Division), and Mr. W. Ryland D. Adkins (Chairman of the Mid-Northamptonshire Liberal Association), and carried unanimously:—

"That, in view of the overwhelming evidences that his Majesty's Ministers no longer command the confidence of the country, and that the House of Commons has ceased to reflect the opinion of the electorate, this meeting of the General Committee of the National Liberal Federation calls upon the Prime Minister to dissolve Parliament and permit the country to pronounce on the Protectionist Policy and the general record of the present Government.

"And this Committee also declares that it is essential to the welfare of the country that the next Parliament should resolutely apply itself to the retrenchment of the National Expenditure, to a settlement of the Education and Licensing questions, and to a bold policy of Social and Electoral Reform."

NATIONAL EDUCATION.

The following resolution, submitted by the Lewisham Liberal Association, was moved by Mr. A. M. Scott, and seconded by Mr. F. Maddison (prospective Liberal Candidate for Burnley):—

"That there can be no final solution of the Religious difficulty in National Education until the State lays aside all claim to interfere, either by support or by control, with Religious Education, and freely leaves to parents and Churches the responsibility for the provision of the same."

The following amendment was moved by Mr. Francis D. Acland (Prospective Liberal Candidate for Yorkshire—Richmond Division), and seconded by Mr. Percy W. Bunting:—

"That this meeting of the General Committee of the National Liberal Federation insists upon the two principles of Public Control and the absence of all Religious Tests for publicly paid teachers, but considers it unnecessary at the present time to lay down further principles of a final settlement."

On a division the amendment was carried, and adopted as a substantive resolution.

THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION.

The following resolution, submitted by the Guildford Division (Surrey) Liberal Association, was proposed by Mr. Aneurin Williams, seconded by Mr. George Leveson-Gower, and carried unanimously:—

"That this meeting of the General Committee of the National Liberal Federation, having regard to the direct responsibility of this country as the signatory to the Berlin Treaty principally responsible for placing Macedonia under the heel of Turkey, and in view of the fact that Turkey has failed to carry out the conditions of that Treaty as regards Macedonia, and that the mandate entrusted to Russia and Austria in 1903 has failed to prevent anarchy and bloodshed, calls upon

his Majesty's Government to take such steps as may be practicable to put an end to these evils by the appointment of a European Governor, as recommended by his Majesty's Government in September, 1903."*

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

The following resolution, submitted by the Bolton Liberal Association, was proposed by Miss Balgarnie, seconded by Mr. A. Honey, supported by Mr. Charles H. Radford (Plymouth), and carried by 177 votes to 19:—

"That the extension of the Parliamentary Franchise to women is urgently needed in the interests of justice, and ought at once to be adopted among the Reforms advocated by the Liberal Party."

PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATURES.

The following resolution, submitted by the Deptford Liberal Association, was proposed by Mr. Herbert Vivian, and seconded by Mr. Herbert:—

"That this Committee hereby affirms the right of every Liberal Association to choose its own Candidates; considers duly chosen Candidates to be entitled to the active support of the Liberal Party; and, while desiring to see the direct representation of Labour in Parliament, deprecates the hostility displayed by the Labour Representation Committee in supporting extreme Socialists against duly chosen Liberal Candidates in certain constituencies."

Mr. Frank Wright (Birmingham) moved the previous question, which was carried by a large majority.

At the conclusion of the meeting the Delegates were entertained at tea by the Officers of the Cheshire Liberal Federal Council, and in the evening a public meeting, under the auspices of the Crewe Division Liberal Association, was addressed by the Earl of Crewe, Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C., Sir John Brunner, Bart., M.P., Mr. James Tomkinson, M.P., and others.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

At their monthly meeting on July 6th the Executive Committee passed the following resolution:—

THE LICENSING BILL.

"That this Executive Committee of the National Liberal Federation unhesitatingly condemns the Prime Minister's motion closing by compart-

* A resolution in similar terms was passed by the Executive Committee at their monthly meeting on January 25th, 1905.

ments the discussion in Committee and on Report of the Licensing Bill now before Parliament, regarding it as an arbitrary and uncalled-for exercise of the powers of the majority which does not allow a reasonable time for the consideration of the clauses of a Social Measure affecting great interests and entailing far-reaching consequences, and therefore demanding close and detailed examination by all persons acquainted with the facts of the case and anxious to promote the sobriety of the people."

At the meeting of the Executive Committee on November 2nd the officers were directed to issue the following circular to the affiliated Associations and the Press:—

THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

"The fact that chance enabled the Prime Minister, on the occasion of his recent speech at Southampton, to pass over in silence the Resolutions adopted by the National Union of Conservative Associations at their meetings on October 28th and 29th, has caused the importance of these Resolutions somewhat to be overlooked. They are important because they have at last made it plain beyond all question that the Tory Party, as a whole (still calling itself the 'Unionist' Party) has adopted as its fighting programme and as its test of Parliamentary candidature the old discarded policy of Protection.

"The matter does not now rest with Mr. Balfour, or even with Mr. Chamberlain. The mischief is afoot, and at the General Election the country will swarm with 'whole-hoggers.' Little will be heard of Retaliation, save from the lips of a few official placemen. Colonial Preference, involving—as it must—dearer food, and a good heavy tax on imported manufactured articles, a portion of the proceeds to go in relief of the Land—that is, in relief of the Landlords—will be universally pronounced to be the panacea for low wages and lack of employment.

"The Executive Committee of the National Liberal Federation are anxious that recent victories should not lead the Liberal Associations of the country to suppose that the battle is over and won, and that Free Trade as our British Policy is safely secured. The issue is too tremendous to admit of any such undue confidence. We have not merely to win the next General Election, but to win it so decisively as to get rid of Protection and to secure that the reaction of the past few years shall be seen no more in our day and generation.

"The Committee hope, therefore, that everything is being done which your Association can do to keep before the Electors the vital question they will have to determine at the Polls: Shall we discard Free Trade and return to Protection?

"We need not add that nothing ought to or can interfere with the position which the Education Question, the Temperance Question, the Land Question, and all branches of Social Reform already hold in the minds and hearts of all good Liberals. We shall fight to win on all these great and moving issues, but the bold adoption by the Tory Party of 'Protection' as

their rallying cry makes it necessary for us to place 'Untaxed Food' and 'Freedom of Trade' in the very forefront of the fight.

"If your Committee can suggest any way by which from here we can help in your constituency, we hope you will not hesitate to communicate with us."

NATIONAL LIBERAL CAMPAIGN FUND.

At the Twenty-fifth Annual Meeting of the Federation held at Scarborough in May, 1903, the Committee appealed to the Party to provide a fund of £50,000, with a view to bringing the constituencies of England and Wales into a condition of preparedness for the next General Election.

The appeal met with a most generous response, which has enabled the Federation from that time onward to give financial assistance of the utmost value to constituencies all over the Kingdom. Up to the present moment (May 1st), with interest allowed by bankers, a total of £38,744 19s. 3d. has been subscribed by 1,663 persons.

It may be permitted to the Committee to re-state briefly what the purposes are for which the money is required:—

- (i.) To bring the Party machinery and every local Liberal Association into the highest state of efficiency in view of an Early Appeal to the Country.
- (ii.) To provide for a universal and systematic distribution of literature, pictorial posters, and other publications, and to organise an adequate force of Speakers, Lecturers and Liberal Missionaries.
- (iii.) To render such financial aid as may be necessary to ensure that Constituencies which are running poor men as their Candidates are not handicapped in the fight by lack of money to pay for essential and legitimate work.

The Committee renew their appeal to all such members of the Party as have not yet contributed to the Fund. There must be many Liberals in the country who, without any lessening of the support which they give to their local Associations, could, at a time like the present, aid the National Fund, however small may be the individual gifts. A vast amount of good work can be done, and done at once, if the funds are forthcoming. To-day the Liberal Party stands in better array for battle than it has done for many years, but the issues to be decided at the next election are so grave, their consequences to the nation are so far-reaching, that no exer-

tion must be spared to win the election by a majority so decisive that the reaction of the last ten years may be not merely scotched but killed outright.

The work, if it is to be done, must be accomplished quickly. The Committee invite all who are in sympathy with the object of the appeal to help in raising the balance of the money so essential to the completion of the task.

THE LIBERAL PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT.

The year has been a particularly busy one with the Liberal Publication Department, which has continued to render admirable service to Liberalism to the general satisfaction of the Party. To cope with the great increase in recent years of the work of the Department, Mr. John Henderson has been appointed Assistant Secretary.

The number of guinea subscribers continues to show a notable increase, and great appreciation is shown of the advantages of a system by which, for an annual payment of a guinea, the subscriber can obtain all the publications of the Department as issued, as well as three bound volumes—*The Liberal Year Book*, *The Liberal Magazine*, and *Pamphlets and Leaflets*. The number of subscribers in 1903 was over 750, and in 1904 nearly a thousand; whilst in 1905 the total has gone up to over 1,150.

The circulation of the *Liberal Magazine* still continues to increase, as the following figures will show—the figures are the net sales per month:—

1898	...	...	...	...	...	1,989
1901	...	...	...	...	...	2,691
1902	...	...	...	...	...	2,837
1903	...	...	...	...	...	3,330
1904	...	...	...	...	...	3,533

It is already certain that the circulation for 1905 will considerably exceed that for 1904.

Great and immediate success has attended a new venture of the Department—*The Liberal Year Book*, the first issue of which (for 1905) was published last December. The publication of the *Liberal Year Book* was justified as an attempt to fill a gap in the

row of annual works of reference, long as that already is. The aim throughout was, not to compete with or displace any existing publication, but to produce a work which should give information either not to be found or less conveniently set out elsewhere. As the title of the book showed, the primary idea was to produce a work of reference for Liberals. None the less, it can confidently be claimed that, without injury to that intention, politicians of every shade of opinion have found the *Liberal Year Book* worth the modest sum of one shilling at which it was published. The *Year Book* will be extended and doubtless improved in subsequent years, but there was a consensus of opinion that its first issue was singularly complete and accurate, and free from the defects which too often accompany new ventures. The whole of the large edition was quickly sold.

As usual, a large number of publications of various kinds were issued during the year, the sale of leaflets, pamphlets, and booklets amounting to many millions. *The Record of Members' Votes* (or, as it is more familiarly called, the "Recording Angel") is now complete from 1886 up to 1904. *The Divisions of the Month* are issued monthly, and for the nominal fee of 5s. a year the votes of any Unionist M.P. in these selected divisions can be obtained each month. A weekly Record of Divisions (particularly suitable for publication in the press) can also be supplied by special arrangement.

The Department has continued to supply *Lantern Lectures* and has issued *Coloured Posters*; of the latter an extremely effective series of posters is in preparation for the General Election.

The Department still acts as publishers of the leaflets and posters issued by the Free Trade Union.

There has been a great increase in the number of enquiries for information with which the Department has dealt, and it is to be hoped that Liberals will not hesitate to ask for any information on current political subjects of which they stand in need.

Continuous care has been expended upon preparation for the General Election, and the Department looks forward to being more useful to the Party at the Dissolution than on any previous similar occasion.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT.

By the death of Sir William Harcourt the Liberal Party lost one of its staunchest and most distinguished leaders. In last year's Report this Federation expressed its regret at the announcement of Sir William Harcourt's intention to retire at the dissolution of the present Parliament. In October came his sudden and unexpected death. At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Liberal Federation, held on October 5th, the following resolution was moved by the Chairman, seconded by Dr. Spence Watson, and unanimously adopted:—

“That this Executive Committee of the National Liberal Federation on behalf of the Liberal Associations of England and Wales, places on record its profound regret at the death of Sir William Harcourt, who, for so many years has been a trusted leader of the Liberal Party, unfailingly loyal to the Cause alike in its prosperity and in its adversity, and always ready to devote to its advancement his brilliant abilities both in counsel and in conflict.

“A noble and commanding figure in Parliamentary life, he always upheld the best traditions of the House of Commons, and was nobly tenacious of its honour and its dignity.

“The Committee is fully assured that the memory of his great services and great personality will ever be cherished with gratitude and admiration.

“The Committee tenders its sincere condolence to Sir William Harcourt's family, and earnestly trusts that the evidence of universal respect evoked for him whom they have lost will in some degree tend to lighten the burden of their sorrow.”

Sir William Harcourt's death removes from the political arena one of the notable figures of the past half-century. It is a loss, not merely to the Liberal Party, but to the House of Commons and to the country. This Annual Report would not be complete without a renewed expression of the Federation's sense of Sir William Harcourt's great services to Liberalism, rendered at so much self-sacrifice, and extending over so many years.

THE BY-ELECTIONS.

Since the General Election of 1900 there have been in Great Britain (excluding the first contest in constituencies contested twice, *e.g.*, Devonport) 57 contested elections. With insignificant exceptions, merely proving the rule, there has been a widespread improvement of the Liberal position, in most cases an enormous improvement. The result in seats is as follows:—

1885	{ L 26 C 31	...	C majority	... 5
1892	{ L 19 C 38	...	C majority	... 19
1900	{ L 16 C 41	...	C majority	... 25
<i>By-Elections, 1902-5.</i>	{ L 33 C 24	...	L majority	... 9

It will be noticed that the Liberal position is not only immensely better than in 1900 but also than in 1885 when the number of Liberals returned was exactly one-half of the whole House.

The result in votes is even more remarkable :—

	<i>By-Elections, 1900-5.</i>		<i>1900 (or last previous contest).</i>	
Opposition Vote...	271,421	...	198,656	Increase of 37 per cent.
Ministerialist Vote	248,717	...	252,217	Decrease of 1·4 per cent.
Majority	...	L 22,704	C 53,561	

The figures as to votes for the last twelve months are particularly noteworthy :—

<i>The Government have in Votes</i>					
		LOST.			GAINED.
Market Harboro'	...	410	...	...	—
Devonport...	...	884	...	...	—
Sowerby	...	711	...	...	—
Chertsey	...	1,738	...	...	—
Oswestry	...	1,392	...	...	—
Reading	...	—	...	...	9
N.E. Lanark	...	3,373	...	...	—
Isle of Thanet	...	662	...	...	—
West Monmouth	...	1,060	...	...	—
Horsham	...	700	...	...	—
Stalybridge	...	1,031	...	...	—
Mile End	...	1,082	...	...	—
North Dorset	...	1,449	...	...	—
Everton	...	478	..	...	—
Appleby	...	—	...	...	359
Buteshire	...	229	...	...	—
Brighton	...	3,419	...	...	—
		18,618			368
		<i>Net loss</i>			
				18,250.	

Taking, however, the whole period since the General Election, the Government have lost twenty seats and gained only two (that in Lanark owing to a third candidature):—

GOVERNMENT LOSSES (20).

Galway (*to Nationalists*)
 Bury
 North Leeds
 Orkney and Shetland
 Newmarket
 Woolwich
 Rye
 Argyll
 St. Andrew's Burghs
 Norwich
 Ayr Burghs
 Mid-Herts
 East Dorset
 **Devonport*
 Oswestry
 †*N.E. Lanark*
 Stalybridge
 North Dorset
 Buteshire
 Brighton

GAINS (2).

†*N.E. Lanark*
 **Devonport*

The following calculation shows how the Government majority of 134 in October, 1900, has become 84 in May, 1905:—

MINISTERIALISTS.

Returned at General Election	...	...	402
Losses at By-Elections	...	L 17, N 1	18
„ by Secession	...	L 9	9
			—
			27
Less Gain by Secession	...	L 1, N 1	2
			—
			25
			—

377

OPPOSITION.LIBERALS.

Returned at General Election	...	...	186	
Gains at By-Elections	...	...	17	
„ by Secession	...	...	9	
			—	
			26	
Less Loss by Secession	...	...	1	
			—	25
				— 211

NATIONALISTS.

Returned at General Election	...	...	82	
Gain at By-Election	...	...	1	
Less Loss by Secession	...	...	1	
			—	0
				— 82
				— 293
				—
Government majority	...	...		84

The nine Liberal gains by secession are :—

Churchill, Winston S.	Kemp, Colonel G.	Seely, Major J. E. B.
Foster, Sir Michael	Poynder, Sir J. Dickson-	Wilson J. (Falkirk).
Guest, Hon. Ivor	Russell, T. W.	Wilson, J. W.

The Nationalist By-Election gain is at Galway. The Ministerialist gains by secession are Sir Edward Reed (L) and Major Jameson (N).

THE FISCAL QUESTION.

The year has been a highly encouraging one for Free-traders. Whenever the country has had the chance it has shown that it sees no good reason for departing from the Fiscal policy which has brought with it such solid advantage during the last sixty years. It little matters what particular brand of Fiscal faith has been professed by the Unionist candidate; the electors have no stomach for the subtleties which may be good enough for Ministerialists in the House of Commons. He who is not for Free Trade is against it, and it is a matter of second-rate importance whether he is a Chamberlainite Tariff Reformer or a Balfourite

Retaliator. So it is that the shifts and devices to deceive the electors into abandoning Free Trade have only resulted in Liberal triumphs in constituencies which a year or two ago seemed impregnable Tory fortresses.

The latest formula designed to secure the unity of the Unionist party (though in Unionist perorations it always appears as the unity of the British Empire) is the Colonial Conference. When last August Mr. Chamberlain first suggested this Mr. Balfour declined to have anything to do with it; but in October, at Edinburgh, the Prime Minister suddenly inscribed it on his programme. As then outlined by him it was unwontedly clear—the Government were to ask for a mandate to call the Conference, and if the Conference agreed to any scheme of Imperial Fiscal Union the country was again to be consulted on the scheme itself. Mr. Chamberlain at once took objection to the “two elections” suggestion, on the ground that it involved needless delay. Since that time the Colonial Conference has become involved in hopeless confusion. We have been told that a Conference will, in any case, be called next year in the ordinary course, and it is impossible to find out what part, if any, the 1906 Conference is to play with regard to the Fiscal question. The Government intervened on Mr. Churchill’s motion with the previous question, on the ground that for the House of Commons to declare against protective taxation of food would tie the hands of the Conference—a senseless contention if the Conference (as would seem to be the case from the Edinburgh speech) is not to be summoned in the lifetime of the present House of Commons. The object aimed at is, in any case, clear—it is to make Tory capital out of our national pride in our Colonies, just as was done in 1900 when the valour of our soldiers was the raw material out of which a Tory triumph was manufactured. Great Britain is to be induced to agree to a friendly discussion with the Colonies, which is to commit us to nothing, and then, should the Conference result in a scheme involving the abandonment of Free Trade, we are to be told that we reject the scheme at peril of losing the Colonies. We are convinced that this plan of campaign is a gross insult, alike to British intelligence and to the good sense and loyalty of the Colonies themselves. It is, indeed, highly significant when we find a leading Canadian

paper saying: "One of our chief humiliations is the tone of men like Mr. Chamberlain, who think we are bound to the Empire by ties of trade preference."

Space does not permit a detailed account of the various stages in the Fiscal controversy. We can only record Mr. Chamberlain's efforts to capture the Liberal-Unionist and Conservative party machinery, and take note of Mr. Balfour's speech at Manchester, in which, by attempting to compress his policy within the limits of one side of a half-sheet of notepaper, he showed how it is possible to be concise without being lucid. Something, however, must be said as to Mr. Balfour's action over the Fiscal motions which have this session been discussed in the House of Commons. On one, Mr. Churchill's, he got the previous question carried; from all the others he ran away. It was advertised in advance that the effect of this would be to discredit the Opposition; as a fact, the result has been precisely the reverse. Mr. Balfour has even allowed a vote of censure upon himself and his own especial policy of Retaliation to be inscribed on the journals of the House as having been passed *nemine contradicente*. It is pitiable that the House of Commons should be degraded by its Leader, who should be the trustee of its honour and usefulness; but it is, at all events, salutary that he himself should reap the discredit which has attended his tactics.

Negotiations are at present said to be in progress which are to unite the Unionist Party. It may be that Mr. Chamberlain is willing for the time being to moderate his transports and not to resume his more offensive operations until after the General Election. However that may be, the duty of Liberals and Free-traders is unaffected. If Mr. Chamberlain should decide to exhibit himself as a Balfourite without definitely abandoning his proposed taxes on food, the only possible effect will be more firmly than ever to saddle the Unionist Party with responsibility for all the various methods by which Free Trade is attacked. The country is not likely to be deceived by any attempt to gain time under cover of a retreat to a mere policy of Retaliation and Colonial Conference. In whatever guise a Protective policy is proposed—whether the *alias* is Retaliation, Colonial Preference, or Tariff Reform—it must

and will be unflinchingly resisted by all who are convinced that theory and experience combine to prove Free Trade to be the bed-rock of Great Britain's well-being and prosperity.

THE GOVERNMENT RECORD.

By the aid of their khaki majority and of closure by compartments—that is to say, by tricking the electorate and muzzling the House of Commons—the Government succeeded in putting the Licensing Act upon the Statute Book. In one single direction the Act was admittedly an improvement upon the Bill, for the Government themselves were forced to introduce amendments as to new licences, which, by securing for the community their “monopoly value,” prevent the growth of fresh interests vested in private individuals or corporations. For the rest, all efforts to secure the insertion of a time limit failed, and the result of the Act, so far as existing licences is concerned, is to convert a licence for one year, merely renewable at the end of that year, into a licence which the owner (if the house is well conducted) can claim as of right, subject to the licence being extinguished with full compensation to the owner. This effects a revolution in licensing law, none the less so because the compensation fund, of limited amount, is provided by the trade itself. The Licensing Act, as it stands, can no more be considered a settlement than the Education Acts. No one imagines that it is possible wholly to repeal it, but it is imperative that at the first possible moment it should be amended. Without going into details it may be added that the amendments should (a) provide a time limit, after which all licences must pay the full monopoly value of the licence; and (b) restore to a local licensing authority the power of refusing licences and imposing conditions.

The country has not had to wait long in order to find out for itself the folly of the Sugar Convention. There has been an enormous rise in the price of sugar in this country, simultaneously with a fall in price on the Continent. It is contended by the apologists for the Convention that this rise of price is due to the shortage in the beet crop. No one disputes this shortage, and it may be that

there would have been some rise in price even if the Convention had not been made. But the argument that the short beet crop is the main factor in the rise proves far too much. For the whole object of the Convention was so to raise the price of sugar as to make sugar-growing in the West Indies profitable. If, with a normal beet crop, prices were to fall to their old level, the Convention would *ipso facto* be a failure. The truth is that the makers of the Convention are not a little frightened at their own handiwork. If the bounty-giving Powers on the Continent, growing tired of taxing their own people to give us cheap sugar, had determined to put a stop to the system, we could have had no cause of complaint. But to coerce these Powers—for that is what was done—into dropping the bounties, and to tie our hands by undertaking to obey the behests of a tribunal in which Great Britain and Roumania have equal voting power, was an act of quixotic folly, which becomes grotesque when it is solemnly paraded as a great triumph for Free Trade. The Protective systems of Continental Powers, which, as a whole, undoubtedly do harm to our trade, consist of tariff walls and bounties; the Tory Government's notion of national advantage is to get rid of the bounties, which to some extent, at all events, compensated us for the injury done by the tariffs.

It is as difficult to fathom the policy of the Government on Army Reform as on the Fiscal question. Mr. Arnold-Forster makes innumerable speeches, but their net effect is merely to create the impression that he is in favour of certain changes which may, or may not, form part of the Government scheme of Army Reform whenever it shall be produced. Meantime the pledge of economy has been redeemed by the introduction of Estimates which exceed last year's by nearly a million of money. Nothing could be more unpardonable than this breach of promise, and the public dissatisfaction is profound, whether at the enormous cost of the Army, the chaotic state of the Government's Army proposals, or the treatment of the Volunteers. The theory that the Navy safeguards us against the risk of invasion does, indeed, seem definitely to have been accepted; but this is to give us no relief in the matter of Army expenditure, since we are now told that the defence of India necessitates our having an army in

readiness larger than that employed in the Boer War. It is more than ever necessary to be on our guard against extravagant theories which bear no real relation to the risks against which they are intended to guard.

The "little wars" in Somaliland and Tibet are over. In Somaliland the Government has messed and muddled, and achieved no result, for in the end the "Mad" Mullah, instead of being caught, has become our ally at one remove through the treaty concluded with him by Italy. In Tibet we have secured a "sort of" treaty, the only valid signature to which is our own. It is something that the home Government overruled the aggressive designs of Lord Curzon, but no more wantonly needless "mission" has ever been sent and withdrawn than that which went to Lhasa. Our national strength should no longer be frittered away by these wars, which cause great loss of life and money without any compensating advantage in the results achieved.

FINANCE.

If Mr. Austen Chamberlain seems more fortunate with his second Budget than with his first, the state of our national finances is none the less extremely disquieting. It is something to the good that the twopence on tea imposed last year is taken off, but, even so, the country is more heavily taxed than it was two years ago, since the twelfth penny on the Income Tax remains. We are not likely to forget the meaning of ten years of Toryism when we remember that a shilling Income Tax has apparently become a permanent part of our scheme of taxation. Indeed, nearly all the taxation imposed during the War remains, for the taxpayer has still to stand the strain of an extra fourpence on the Income Tax, an extra twopence a pound on tea, a halfpenny a pound on sugar, an extra shilling per barrel on beer, an extra sixpence per gallon on spirits, a shilling per ton on exported coal, and extra taxation on tobacco. The secret of the mischief is the enormous and unjustifiable increase in the annual normal expenditure which, in eleven years, has grown by 48 millions—an increase of 52 per cent., whilst, during the same time, the population has only grown by 11 per cent. The

following are significant figures—they are taken from the annual Budget statements, and relate to normal expenditure exclusive of war:—

	£
1894-5 (<i>Last complete Liberal year</i>) ...	94,000,000
1898-9 (<i>Last Tory year before South African War</i>)	108,000,000
1903-4 (<i>First Tory year after South African War</i>)	141,000,000
1905-6 (<i>estimated</i>)	142,000,000

Nor, indeed, is this the whole of the story, because these figures, large as they are, include neither the amounts intercepted by the Local Taxation Account, nor the amount spent on capital account. Most of the increased expenditure is in the Army and Navy Estimates, and even these do not include the amounts spent on naval and military works, which have also increased enormously. In the last Liberal year (1894-5) the amount of the Army and Navy Estimates was 35½ millions; in this year's estimates (1905-6) the amount is 63½ millions—or an increase of nearly 28 millions (that is, about 80 per cent.) in eleven years. There is a welcome decrease of 3½ millions this year in the Navy Estimates, but the Army Estimates have actually gone up, though everybody knows that much less could, and ought to, be spent without any loss of national security. Retrenchment will not be easy, but it is imperative, and since armaments depend upon policy it will be the task of a Liberal Government to make our expenditure on the Navy and Army more nearly correspond to the true national requirements.

In a well-meant endeavour to restore the national credit, Mr. Austen Chamberlain has increased the fixed Debt charge from 27 to 28 millions. But the seriousness of the situation can be seen when it is stated (*a*) that of the 220 millions which the South African War cost, 165 millions remain as debt, and (*b*) that last year, whilst 7½ millions of old debt were paid off, 9½ millions of new debt were added. In fact, even with the addition of a million to the fixed debt charge, nothing is done to decrease the national indebtedness, since a million more is to be spent in the current year

on capital account. The *Statist* has properly drawn attention to the following alarming facts :—

- (1) We have paid off no debt since the war ;
- (2) We shall pay off no debt in the current year (1905-6) ;
- (3) We shall pay off no debt in either 1906-7 or 1907-8.

That is to say, for six years after the end of a costly war, involving an enormous addition to our capital liabilities, the revenue of the country will not provide anything for reducing the debt of the country.

In a word, there is no department in which a sane and business-like policy is more required than in finance. It is already being said that all the expenditure is inevitable and that the only alternative to the present high rate of taxation is Tariff Reform, by which "the foreigner will be made to pay." But to embark upon Protection in order to reduce taxation would be the worst of all possible policies. Under our present Fiscal system every penny goes from the taxpayer's pocket into the Treasury, whilst under a system of tariffs only a fraction of the Protective tax would find its way thither.

THE SITUATION AND OUTLOOK.

The novelty of the King's Speech of 1905 was the promise of "proposals" for Redistribution. It is still a secret what the form and substance of these "proposals" will prove to be, but it is no secret that nobody expects the Government to carry through a Redistribution Bill. Since that is so, it is only necessary to say that Liberals fully recognise the existence of anomalies in our system of representation, and would welcome any genuine advance in the direction of more equal electoral districts, provided that it were accompanied by equally pressing reforms in our registration and electoral system, and, in particular, by the abolition of plural voting.

Of the rest of the Government's sessional programme, two measures and two only need to be mentioned. The Unemployed Bill can frankly be recognised as an honest attempt to do something to begin the solution of a problem which, by common consent, is one of the greatest difficulty and complexity.

It is to be hoped it will be treated as a non-party question, and that the measure will, as the result of discussion, lay a foundation for future action. As to the Aliens Bill, the best commentary on the rhetoric of the Tory platform is the fact that the Bill has been introduced under a rule which is reserved for legislation of secondary importance. No one denies that by the use of false and exaggerated statistics feeling has been excited on the subject, and expectations have been created that the measure will provide much employment for British workers; but it is in the highest degree unlikely that anything substantial will be achieved in this direction. This year's Bill differs from last, and in so far as it merely attempts to exclude the criminal and the diseased alien, no one will wish to prevent its becoming law. But it aims at doing much more, and the greatest care will have to be taken that the right of asylum is preserved, and that we do not exclude a class of immigrants who, although not of our own race, have in the past materially contributed to the prosperity of their adopted country.

The Irish question may be said to have entered upon a new phase resulting from the revelations as to the circumstances under which Sir Antony MacDonnell was appointed in 1902. We now know that one of Mr. Balfour's first acts as Prime Minister was to assent to the new departure by which Mr. Wyndham appointed Sir Antony MacDonnell, an Irishman, a Nationalist, and a Roman Catholic to be his "colleague" as Under-Secretary, in order to carry out certain specified objects, including the "co-ordination" of Irish government. It is true that Mr. Balfour has now surrendered to the Loyalist faction, and, sacrificing Mr. Wyndham to their attacks, has protested that he is as much opposed to Home Rule as ever. But none the less the incident stands as an admission that even a Unionist Prime Minister and Irish Secretary recognise as essential that something should be done so that Ireland shall be governed by Irishmen in accordance with Irish ideas. As to the Liberal Party and Ireland, the Federation associates itself with every word of the admirable and courageous speech recently made in the House of Commons by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman on the Tuff motion.

The Government's decision as to the two new Colonies in South Africa is to set up in the Transvaal a Legislative Assembly

including a proportion of official members, and to do nothing in the case of the Orange River Colony. The Transvaal Legislative Assembly will have very little real power, since the Intercolonial Council will still have control of the railways, the constabulary, the land settlement and the service of the £35,000,000 loan, and it is certain that this experiment (as Mr. Lyttelton calls it) will only end in failure unless at an early date full self-government is conceded, and the people of the Transvaal allowed to manage their own affairs. There is no sort of justification for making the constitution of the Orange River Colony dependent on the result of the Transvaal experiment, and this distrust of the Dutch in that Colony, which has always known how to govern itself with wisdom, cannot fail to have a bad effect on those who are now our fellow-subjects. As to Chinese Labour, nothing has occurred to lessen the objections taken by the Liberal Party to the introduction of the indentured Chinaman. It is, indeed, alleged that there has, in consequence, been a great increase in the number of whites employed. This is a half truth concealing the truth, since the rate of increase in the number of whites employed is less than that in the number of Kaffirs, without taking into account the 30,000 Chinese. There is nothing to show that more whites are now employed than if not a single Chinaman had been introduced.

The custom has again been followed of not including in the Agenda any general resolution dealing with Liberal principles as a whole. This course is solely dictated by considerations of time, and the Committee desire once again to put on record the continued adherence of the Federation to all the points of Liberal policy for which it has contended. The Liberal Party is united and confident, it is grateful to Lord Spencer and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and their colleagues in both Houses of Parliament for their staunch and unflinching advocacy of Liberal principles. It is true that Mr. Balfour's Government still lives to tell the tale, but that is merely because of the support of a Khaki majority, which knows that dissolution involves party disaster. The General Election has been so long expected that its postponement may have caused disappointment; but there are solid compensations, from the party point of view, for the delay. Liberal

organisation has been strengthened and improved, a vast amount of propagandist and educational work has been achieved, particularly in parts of the country where, from one cause or another, Liberalism has until now been at a disadvantage. The business of Liberals is not to relax their exertions until the country has once and for all got rid of a Government which, for years past, has had no moral authority to remain in office. Nothing must be left to chance. However certain victory may appear to be, the battle must be fought as if the result depended upon the exertion of every individual soldier. In that spirit, and confident in the soundness of their cause, Liberals look to the future with the certain expectation that the long rule of Toryism is almost at an end, and that Liberal statesmen will soon be called upon to apply Liberal principles, both in administration and in legislation, for the restoration of the credit, well-being, and strength of the Country and of the Empire.

NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION.

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS.

Dr. FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31st, 1904. *Cr.*

RECEIPTS.			PAYMENTS.		
	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
To Cash at Bankers, Jan. 1st, 1904	251	8 5	By Salaries and Wages, and Fees of Agents and Organisers	1,900	1 6
„ Cash in hands of Secretaries	150	0 0	„ Registration, Organisation, and Travelling Expenses	320	10 4
„ Subscriptions and Donations and Grants from Special Fund.....		3,359 16 9	„ Printing, Stationery, Newspapers, &c. ..	220	14 1
			„ Public Meetings, Lectures, Depu- tations, Conferences and Annual and other Meetings of the Federa- tion	357	2 10
			„ Rent, Coals and Lighting	273	10 2
			„ Postages and Telegrams	180	1 2
			„ Office Furniture and Plant a/c	5	14 1
			„ Office and Incidental Expenses	113	11 11
				3,371	6 1
			„ Cash at Bankers, Dec. 31st, 1904 ...	289	19 1
			„ Cash in hands of Secretaries	100	0 0
				389	19 1
					£3,761 5 2

Examined, and found correct,

(Signed) C. C. SMITH & RICHARDS,

Chartered Accountants,

CORDEN CHAMBERS, CORPORATION STREET,

BIRMINGHAM.

January 25th, 1905.

(Signed) JOHN MASSIE, Treasurer.

NOTE.—The above Balance-Sheet relates only to the General Working Account of the National Liberal Federation. The Finance Committee will prepare a statement in respect of the National Liberal Campaign Fund when that Fund has been closed and administered.

PROCEEDINGS
AT THE
TWENTY-SEVENTH
ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE
NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION
HELD AT NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE,
ON
MAY 18TH, 19TH, AND 20TH, 1905.

*Most of the speeches here recorded have been revised by the speakers
mainly from the excellent reports of the "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN"
and "NEWCASTLE CHRONICLE."*

PROCEEDINGS
AT THE
TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE
NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION
HELD AT NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE,
MAY 18TH AND 19TH, 1905.

FIRST SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

THURSDAY, MAY 18TH.

The first Session of the Council was held in the Town Hall at two o'clock. Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C. (President of the Federation) occupied the Chair.

Among those who were present at one or more of the meetings were the following :—

The Right Hon. the Earl of Aberdeen, G.C.M.G., Mr. W. C. B. Beaumont, M.P., Mr. Thomas Burt, M.P., Mr. Charles Fenwick, M.P., Sir Christopher Furness, M.P., Mr. Ellis J. Griffith, M.P., the Right Hon. R. B. Haldane, K.C., M.P., the Right Hon. C. H. Hemphill, K.C., M.P., Sir James Joicey, Bart., M.P., Mr. Leif Jones, M.P., Mr. John Johnson, M.P., Mr. George Lambert, M.P., Dr. T. J. Macnamara, M.P., Mr. Reginald McKenna, M.P., Mr. J. A. Pease, M.P., Mr. Walter Runciman, M.P., Mr. Herbert Samuel, M.P., Mr. Eugene Wason, M.P., Mr. T. P. Whittaker, M.P., Mr. John Wilson, M.P.; the following prospective Liberal Candidates :— Mr. J. O. Andrews, Mr. J. J. Brigg, Mr. Thomas Cairns, Mr. W. Claridge, Mr. Harold Cox, Mr. Herbert Craig, Mr. Thomas R. Ferens, Mr. A. Grant, Mr. Edwin Hamer, Mr. Richard D. Holt, the Hon. Geoffrey Howard, Mr. E. G. Jellicoe, Mr. Fred Maddison, Dr. G. H. Pollard, Mr. J. M. Robertson, Mr. A. H. Scott, Mr. John Tweddle; the following officers and members of the Executive Committee of the National Liberal Federation :— Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C. (President), Mr. Edward Evans (Chairman of Committee), Mr. John Massie (Treasurer), Mr. Robert A. Hudson (Secretary), Mr. Frank Barter (Assistant Secretary), Mr. Francis D. Acland, Mr. William Angus, Mr. Robert Bird, Mr. J. F. L. Brunner, Mr. P. W. Bunting, Mr. W. Howell Davies, Mr. Hugh Fullerton, Mr. Percy Illingworth, Mr. Harry Nuttall, Mr. Charles H. Radford, Mr. Frank Wright; Mr. W. H. Lever, Mr. J. E. Willans, Mr. W. H. Chadwick (the "Old Chartist"), Mr. Charles Geake (Secretary of the Liberal Publication

Department), Mr. J. Renwick Seager (Liberal Central Association); and the officers of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal Association—Mr. Councillor George Lunn (Chairman of Executive), Mr. Councillor W. Murray (Vice-Chairman), Mr. Harry Benson (Treasurer), Mr. W. J. Noble (Hon. Secretary), Mr. James Corrie (Secretary), and Mr. George Beattie (Secretary of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal Club). About 400 Parliamentary constituencies were directly represented by appointed delegates to the number of 1,200, including, in a large number of instances, the Presidents and other officers of the affiliated Liberal Associations of England and Wales.

The President's Address.

Report and Statement of Accounts.

MR. BIRRELL said: We meet once again in this famous Northern city, full of memories for us—some proud, some sweet, a few bitter, but all full either of inspiration or instruction. We meet in full fighting array, but still in the cold shades of Opposition. The present political situation has been discussed so often, in so many places, and by so many politicians of different colours that it is little use saying anything upon it. It is, no doubt, a situation very trying to the temper, but we have in this matter strange companions in our trials, for the Tariff Reformers can hardly be less disgusted than ourselves. A short while ago they were full of hopes and expectations. Their great leader had unfurled the banner of Protection, and travelled east, west, south, and north, predicting for his cause a speedy triumph, supported as it was by the main body of the Tory party. But our victory over these forces has been only too complete. Mr. Chamberlain's Parliamentary hosts have deserted him, and are now tumbling over one another in the anxiety they display to find political salvation in the once despised, obscure, and inconsistent policy of Retaliation. The situation, I repeat, is a trying one, because for two years past we have been living the full lives of eager politicians on the eve of a General Election, with our organisations fully equipped for every detail of the contest; but Mr. Balfour still remains behind the barricades of the Septennial Act, mocking our pomp and grinning at by-elections. Our motto must be, "Patience to work and patience to wait." To destroy a Parliamentary majority of 150 can never be an easy job. The delay has been of great use to us. Our excellent candidates have in the great majority of instances been a long time before their constituencies; they are well known, and have held quite an unparalleled number of meetings. Villages heretofore unvisited now know the excitement of a political meeting. Mr. Balfour's dialectical skill, his astute policy in wearing down Mr. Chamberlain's, excites the admiration of his Whips and the envy of his more dull-witted colleagues; but in the country, where plain men still live, his dodges and devices, his runnings away from the House he is supposed to lead, his secret dealings with his rival, on whose half-contemptuous friendship he has still to rely, excite

nothing but feelings of mingled amazement, indignation, and contempt. The rehabilitation of the present Government is, I believe, impossible. We know that our avenger liveth in the shape of the voter at the polls, and we are also well persuaded that the longer Mr. Balfour puts off his appeal to the country the better prepared we shall be for the fight and the more crushing will be the defeat he will eventually sustain. No doubt we are longing for the time when we shall escape from the atmosphere we have breathed too long—of mere resolutions. We sorely want, after all these years of miserable inaction, to see something done. "Good thoughts," says Lord Bacon, "though God accept them, yet towards men are little better than good dreams, except they be put in act; and that cannot be without power and place." Lord Bacon knew well the meaning of words, and was deeply initiated in the insignificance of things, and he knew what he was about when he put "power" before "place," for place without power is never worth having. I was much struck by some observations lately made by the first President of the Federation, Mr. Chamberlain, who still, it is pleasing to know, insists that he is as good a Radical as he ever was. Mr. Chamberlain said the other day that Liberals and Non-conformists were very foolish to pin their high hopes upon the accession to place of the Liberal Government, because, said he, though they may be for a short while in place, they will never have the power to do anything, "whereas"—so he insinuated—"you have only to fall down and worship me, good old Radical as I still am; call me master, and I will give you, if not all the things you want, at least some of them, whilst Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and his friends will never be able to give anything in the shape of completed legislation." In these observations of Mr. Chamberlain you may see foreshadowed what his Opposition policy will be when he is completely unmuzzled. He hopes to be able to point to a Liberal Ministry on the front bench and say: "There you are again, playing the old game, ploughing the same weary sands, running your heads against the brick wall of the House of Lords, and powerless to keep your pledges with the electorate." Should these confident prognostications of our former President (Mr. Chamberlain) prove to be well founded, then indeed the history of the famous and historic Liberal Party will be ended, and earnest reformers will find it necessary to form fresh alliances and enter into new combinations. Unless the Liberal Party, when it next gets a majority in the House of Commons, can do what it wants, can carry its measures into law and keep its pledged word to the people, it will have become nothing more than a political association for playing the Tory game and for making their task easier than it would be if the Liberal Party did not exist. But with Mr. Balfour clinging to office, with his contemptuous disregard for the declared opinion of the 'country, we may confidently expect not only a majority but one large enough to give the Liberal Party not only place but power, and if that power,

once attained, is used, as I think it will be, firmly and unfalteringly, then once more the country will recognise the fact that the Liberal Government is still what it has been in the past—a great democratic instrument for securing sensible government, both at home and abroad, and a long series of progressive reforms. How much can be done in financial reform to restore confidence in the Liberal Party? Two or three good, sound Budgets, which should, without impairing the strength and efficiency of the Navy or damp the ardour of our Volunteer forces, take off taxes on the necessities of life and reduce the income tax to its proper peace footing will go far to remind the country that there is still a party in the State whose traditional policy is to reduce the burden of taxation and to secure economy, efficiency, and honesty in all the spending departments of the State. Every penny of remitted taxation fructifies in the pockets of the people. The sad case of the ratepayer cannot be longer overlooked, and the time has surely come to utilise the information that has been so laboriously collected on this vexed question and to adjust this heavy burden so as to make each shoulder bear its proper weight. In the resolutions to be submitted to you to-day and to-morrow you will see shortly stated some questions of primary importance, such as the land question, which goes to the very root of the matter; the problem of the unemployed, of which Mr. Chamberlain makes such scandalous use; the licensing question, the education question, and other matters which press most heavily upon our immediate attention. This year we submit them to you in the form of resolutions; before long we trust we shall meet to discuss not resolutions but bills, and to see before us the bright prospect of immediate legislation. I beg to move that the report and statements of accounts be received and adopted.

Sir JAMES JOICEY, Bart., M.P. (Durham—Chester-le-Street), in seconding the motion, said he spent his life as a commercial man, and as such he submitted himself to his constituents. They had in Newcastle a large body of energetic Liberals, sound men, anxious for the progress of the country. At the last election there was a slight change; but he believed they would show at the next general election that the change was only temporary, and that they should have recovered their usual health and strength in political matters. The Liberal party had every reason to be satisfied with its prospects. The majority of 134 which the Tory party had at the last general election had been whittled down to 84. That was a large number even yet; but their patience in the House of Commons was almost exhausted. The Government had lost the confidence of the country. Never had a Government greater opportunities than the present Government had had. If the Liberals had had such a majority they should have made a record of progress such as had never been equalled in the history of this country. Under leaders like Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and with supporters such as he had had during all the trying time of opposition, he was satisfied that they

would have been able to give a very good account of their stewardship. He criticised the enormous expenditure, and asked what they had got for it. Mr. Balfour had reduced himself to a low standard by means of the contemptible attempts he made to carry out what he believed to be his policy. He congratulated them at that delightful meeting, and hoped they would go back to different parts of the country with one voice, and that that one voice would carry the Liberal party to the greatest measure of success it had ever had in its history.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Election of President and Treasurer.

Mr. WM. ANGUS (President of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal and Radical Association) moved :—

“That Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C., be re-elected President, and that Mr. John Massie be re-elected Treasurer for the ensuing year.”

He said when Dr. Spence Watson, whom they in the North knew so well and loved so dearly, who was now prostrated on a foreign shore, but who was following every hour of their proceedings—when Dr. Watson resigned the presidency of that Federation they wondered where the man was to be found worthy to stand in his shoes. Where was there so robust a Radical, so cultured a thinker, so genial a comrade, so capable a leader, so excellent a man? In these qualities the Federation had found in Mr. Birrell Dr. Watson's very brother. And Mr. Birrell had qualities of his own which he shared with no other man. In him wit and wisdom dwelt in happy companionship. His optimism never failed him, his confidence in his cause and his country never faltered. When the foundations of all things seemed to be giving way, and most of them were, in despair, Mr. Birrell stood calm, and the smile upon his strong face seemed the reflection of the better days that were coming. He was glad to hear him say that he was content with his army, with its discipline, with its preparation for the fight. They had for the coming battle no army corps which existed only on paper; they were not without an organisation or a plan of campaign; their big guns were not worn out merely by the firing of salutes; and he did not think that their enemy when they met next would complain of their shortage of cordite. He congratulated Mr. Birrell and themselves upon the prospects that lay before them; and so he most heartily proposed that Mr. Birrell be re-elected. For their man of business they went to the classic shades of Oxford. But Mr. Massie had known how to keep their expenditure within their income, and he had shown imagination and courage in the sum he had asked for special purposes. More than that, he had proved his prudence and knowledge by the large sum which he had already got contributed to that fund. And in proposing the re-election of Mr. Massie, it only remained for the few Liberals who had not contributed to the special fund to do so. He went on to say that their representative system was on its trial. No party could live on its past; but the principles of Liberalism

were more necessary for the future than in the past. Progress could be most rapidly made, advances could be more securely guarded through the efforts of the Liberal Party. The Party had a great future before it. It had to guide the perplexed democracy into better things, to adapt legislation to the altered condition of things of the present day, to make up for the wasted years of Toryism, and to restore this England of theirs once more to its ancient past of progress, retrenchment, and reform.

Mr. THOMAS CAIRNS (Prospective Liberal Candidate for Newcastle-on-Tyne) seconded the motion. A better brief had never been put into his hands. In being asked to reappoint Mr. Birrell as President of the National Liberal Federation, they were not being asked to take a leap in the dark. He was one who had stood true to the faith, in times of stress and trouble, in times of gloom. They had seen not only his robust Radicalism, but they had heard also his cheery words. He often wondered whether Mr. Birrell would preserve his cheery spirits when the times were prosperous and happy for them. They had trusted Mr. Birrell in the past, and they could not do better than trust him in the future. Mr. Massie, their treasurer, had not only kept the faith, but had kept the substance also, and was prepared to safeguard and wisely expend whatever funds they might place in his hands.

Mr. CAIRNS put the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

The President and Treasurer having briefly thanked the Council for their re-election, Mr. Birrell, at the request of the meeting, despatched the following telegram to Dr. Spence Watson at Teneriffe: "Federation in meeting sends affectionate greeting—Birrell."

The Political Situation.

Mr. THOMAS BURT, M.P. (Morpeth), moved:—

"That this Council records its hearty and unabated confidence in Lord Spencer and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and their colleagues in the two Houses of Parliament, and calls upon Ministers to submit themselves to the judgment of the constituencies instead of clinging to office in face of the country's clearly expressed condemnation of their record and policy."

He said not only their thanks but their gratitude was due to Lord Spencer and Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman for the ability and honesty with which they had endeavoured to serve the Liberal cause in the present Parliament. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, in this city, had described himself as a politician without ambition. Somebody said it might be a good deal better if he had some ambition. He was not at all sure—public men needed some driving power, and there were worse things than a worthy ambition. But Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had motive power—and what he was saying of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman applied equally to Lord Spencer. Both of them had motive power of the higher kind. They had unflinching courage, keen, clear forethought and sagacity; they had inflexible adherence to

duty and to principle. He trusted, and believed, that they would not only accord them their hearty and unabated confidence, but that they would do all they could to strengthen their hands in the difficult position that they now occupied. The position might be difficult ; but he did not think they would be for long in the minority that they were in at the present time. As to the second clause in the resolution, he was not sure that that was a call to which there would be an immediate response. They were asking a good deal. They were calling upon sinners to accelerate the day of judgment ; they were calling upon criminals to hasten the day of execution. He did not think that they would get a cheerful or very prompt response to that request. Yet it was reasonable enough. Mr. Chamberlain said he wanted a general election—that it had been too long delayed. He had thought that they should never again be in complete agreement with Mr. Chamberlain ; but they were quite ready to say “ Amen ” to that remark. Mr. Chamberlain was always right ; he told them so in his speech at Birmingham. He did not say he was always consistent ; but he said it was better to be right than to be consistent. He did not wonder that Mr. Chamberlain fought shy of the word “ consistency.” To be always right was given to no man, especially to no politician. A weathercock was always right—when it was in good order. A whirlwind in the neighbourhood of a weathercock, as his friend Mr. Lloyd-George had pointed out, acted as a disturbing element. There was usually a whirlwind not far from the neighbourhood of Mr. Chamberlain ; but at the present time they were in a calm. Mr. Chamberlain was acting in a new character, which seemed a rather difficult thing. An enthusiastic supporter in the press had declared that he was waiting and serving ; like Jacob, he was waiting for Rachel. These questions of courtship were of perennial and universal interest. Jacob served for seven years—which was an early hint of the Septennial Act. Having served seven years, he served another seven years ; and that seemed to foreshadow the two general elections ere the fiscal question could be fairly launched before the country. There was a great difference between Jacob and Mr. Chamberlain. Jacob was in the prime of life, and belonged to a long-lived family Jacob had reached, he believed—his friend Mr. Fenwick would know better than himself—the mature age of 146. If Mr. Chamberlain could wait, he did not think the nation could or ought to wait. We did not live in those spacious times. We wanted to have some of the great social questions affecting the welfare of the people of this country thoroughly and effectively handled. Their policy they would find in the report—not the whole of the policy, but enough to be going on with, when they had all the reactionary measures of the present Government also to lick into shape. The twin curse of Drink and Militarism must be earnestly attacked. In six years they had added 161 millions to the National Debt. The economies of half a century had been swallowed up during the last six or seven years. Social questions could only be dealt with when we had a healthy exchequer.

MR. ELLIS J. GRIFFITH, M.P. (Anglesey), in seconding, said the presence of Mr. Burt and Mr. Fenwick upon that platform was, he thought, a sign of good omen for the Liberals throughout the country, because it was a proof of the fact that Labour and Liberalism could unite on the same platform, and that the leaders of the Labour movement could see their way to support Liberals in their meetings and resolutions. The meaning of the resolution he had to second was that they condemned, and that the country condemned, the present Ministers of the Crown; that as a result of that condemnation they called upon them to submit themselves to the judgment of the country, and in view of that emergency they had confidence in the leaders of the Liberal party to take their place. They condemned the Government in the first place because they came into office on one issue, and had remained in power after that issue had been determined. They had allied themselves with the classes who were least deserving of protection from a British Government. They had exhausted the mandate long since, and had gone on with measures for which they had no mandate. In his opinion the word "condemnation" should be set aside, and he would replace it with the word "contempt." The devices and tricks, the runnings away from the House, were thought to be clever, but the country had found out what it meant. The by-elections showed that the Government had lost the confidence of the country. The leaders of the Liberal party, Lord Spencer and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, had shown great courage in times of stress and storm and trial. They had brought energy and wisdom to the counsels of the Liberal party, and through a trying time they had kept the high ideals of the Liberal party. He trusted that next year Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman would be Prime Minister. The business of politics was not a mere game of "who's in and who's out," and the object of that meeting was to say that some of the reforms upon which they had set their hearts would come into existence as legislation of this country. Among the reforms to be dealt with the speaker included social reform, housing, water, land, and all the facilities of life. These, he said, ought to be the basis, the very rock, of the Liberal party; and if it stuck to that policy he had no doubt what would take place at the next general election. That would be the beginning of a great legislative movement for the amelioration of the people.

MR. J. A. PHASE, M.P. (Essex—Saffron Walden), said: Facts frequently are more eloquent than arguments. During the ten years the Government had been in power they had expended over war and armaments 400 millions of pounds more than the rate which prevailed when the Liberals left office in 1895. That was equivalent to an expenditure of £50 per household of every five persons in this country. They had also increased their certain national liabilities to the extent of 140 millions, and their contingent national liabilities to 90 millions, which brought up the total of their national liabilities to 968 millions of pounds. They had taxed the people at the rate of

£3 per head for the £2 of their Liberal predecessors. The cause of economy cried aloud for a change of Government. The taxpayers asked when this excessive extravagance would be stopped, and when there would be an end to this abomination. Mr. Griffith had alluded to the fact that this Government had been returned on a fraudulent issue long since exhausted, but that was not all, for they had passed by the help of their slavish majority measure after measure, and laws were even now being made, for which they had not only no mandate from the country but on subjects which ministers, at the election in 1900, pledged themselves not to touch in the event of their being returned again to power. Since the last general election not only had they had a new Sovereign, but every minister of any ability had vacated the office he was then holding: Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr. Ritchie, Lord James of Hereford, Mr. Arthur Elliot, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Lord George Hamilton, the Duke of Devonshire, and Mr. George Wyndham. The only man with ability left was the Prime Minister, whose ability was of a peculiar character. His dexterity in the use of words, and power of ambiguity in expression, was unrivalled. His equivocation, mystification, misrepresentation, and deception was an unedifying spectacle, and was disastrous to the honesty which should obtain in public life and in Parliament. The country wished to have a general election in order to condemn the fiscal proposals of Mr. Chamberlain. The country also recognises that that gentleman's repeated inaccurate assertions, his allusions to the decadence of their industrial trade, had produced a certain amount of damage to their credit which business men deplored. Business men and wage-earners alike desired to have this question settled so that they could carry on in peace their calling and beneficial employment. Another reason for an immediate general election was that the Liberal leaders had placed before the country a programme which was acceptable and urgent. He could not allude to all the items, but they needed a national system of education based on popular control, with abolition of all religious tests. They wished a reform of their land system, a reform of their poor laws, they wanted social reform, reform of their system of taxation and rating, and economy and efficiency in every department in the Government. And there was another reason why this Government should appeal to the country. Their retention of office was a great strain upon the various political organisations in this country. It was hard upon candidates and members of Parliament, but it was irritating to the constituencies, which were now ready for the fight. Few persons realised the work involved in bringing about the state of preparation which had been attained. They desired to give credit for the work done by the National Liberal Federation, by the various Liberal organisations, and by individual workers throughout the country, but he thought two men were deserving their special gratitude. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who had been unjustly maligned and maliciously assailed, but who had stood at the helm gallantly, and through storm and tempest had guided the Liberal ship and steered it safely into the smoother waters through which she now sailed. The

other was Mr. Herbert Gladstone, who in 1899 had undertaken duties which probably no one else could have performed with equal ability. His quiet, unostentatious work had enabled candidates to be selected in constituencies previously not fought, and it was no secret that arrangements had been made to fight every seat, with possibly one or two exceptions in favour of Free Trade Unionist Members of Parliament. Mr. Gladstone had faced his difficulties with a cheeriness, resolution, sound judgment, and common sense which had endeared him to those who knew him best. Labour and Liberal candidates were everywhere working together for the same ends, and Mr. Gladstone's work deserved their highest praise and warm gratitude. The By-Elections showed that the country was ready for a change of Government. The day of reckoning was at hand. But Ministers and their supporters, like a lot of naked children, stood shivering on the bank of the Dissolution river into which they were forced to enter—the longer they shivered the colder would the immersion be. A few strong swimmers here and there might breast the current, but most would founder and never be heard of again. Success was assured to that party and Nation who were distinguished for right doing and honest dealing, and for that reason he felt sure the future of the country was with the Liberal party, and might God speed the day.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Free Trade.

SIR CHRISTOPHER FURNESS, M.P. (Hartlepool), proposed the following resolution :—

“That this Council convinced of the benefits which have accrued to this country through the adoption of Free Trade as the national policy affirms its unwavering determination to resist all proposals to depart from that policy, since, whether presented under the guise of Tariff Reform, Retaliation, Preferential Trade, or Protection, they must inevitably raise the price of food and raw materials, diminish trade, involve us in a war of tariffs, endanger our relations with the colonies, and threaten the stability of the Empire.”

He said: It is now two years since the country was startled with proposals for a change in our Fiscal system. They have been discussed and re-discussed by all classes of the community, and, though it may be frankly admitted that at first they appeared to catch the eye of the “man in the street,” the patent and outstanding fact, after the searching enquiry that has been directed to the subject from every side, and despite the manifold activities of the Tariff Reform League, is that the policy we have pursued as a national policy for more than half a century is as sound to-day as when first it was adopted. I therefore do not propose to detain you with the earlier part of the resolution, because every man ought to be convinced of the benefits which have accrued to this country through the adoption of Free Trade, but I would ask you to resist any departure from that policy whether presented under the guise of Tariff Reform, Retaliation,

Preferential Trade, or Protection. It is too late in the day for anyone to attempt to refute the statement that Protection, pure and simple, would mean dearer food, dearer raw material, a higher cost of living, the diminution of general comfort, and a seriously increased cost of production, to say nothing of the dislocation of business which would ensue, and which might arouse in this country the political discontent, the sense of injustice, and class hatred which is such a striking feature in the social economy of Russia, as well as Germany. It may, however, be urged that Protection is not before the country, that the Prime Minister says he is not a Protectionist, and that he declines to lead a Protectionist Party. I propose, therefore, to deal for a few minutes with the policy known as Mr. Balfour's, viz., Retaliation, or the imposition of Customs duties with the ostensible object of forcing foreigners to lower their tariffs and take more of our goods. This, to my mind, is to do evil in the hope that good may come of it. Let us reduce the question to a definite and practical issue, because, after all, it is essentially a question for practical business men. Mr. Balfour asks permission to retaliate, that is, to declare commercial war, not against any one country in particular, but against all countries in general, not, he says, to enhance prices here, but to force others to buy more from us. Although I have looked very anxiously, I have not seen or heard how this is to be done. Hitherto the advocates of great changes have explained their policy. They drew forecasts of their methods, and stated the probable results and their benefits and advantages, just as, when starting a commercial enterprise, we try to think everything out, or, to put it shortly, we look before we leap. Our Ministers act differently. They would take this leap in the dark, and would declare commercial war with a light heart, hoping their opponents would capitulate at once; they would convulse and dislocate our immense trade just as they entered into the South African War, without foresight, without plans, and without preparation, and on the same erroneous assumption. We have to remember that our position and circumstances to-day are vastly different to our position and circumstances prior to the abolition of the Corn Laws. We have gigantic and continually increasing traffic, not merely with tariff countries, but with the whole world, and it is no light thing to experiment with the fundamental principles on which that trade has been built up, viz., an unfettered market for the exchangeable commodities of the entire world. There is this vital difference between the two contending policies: You do not risk the loss of any trade when you open your markets—you may risk the loss of much when you hedge them about with restrictions. I do not say all is well; I do not say that we are in a prosperous condition; I do not say that the future is free from anxiety; but I do say that the proposals of the Government would be dangerous and ruinous to our industries and the best interests of the country. The remedy is not tariffs, nor

is it a general reduction of our workmen's wages to the low level of their competitors on the Continent, but national sobriety, national energy, national industry, national application, national efficiency. Possessed of these qualities, I have no fear as to our country maintaining its position as a commercial and manufacturing nation. Much as I should like higher prices, much as I desire trade improvement, I cannot see how a tariff war would do us anything but great harm, and deprive many thousands of their employment. Let me assume that the Ministry, in order to increase the sale of Lancashire cotton, Yorkshire woollens, and Nottingham lace, determined to compel foreigners to receive more of these goods, and with this object imposed heavy retaliatory duties. They might single out, say, Spain, Norway, Sweden, Italy, or some other countries. These countries in their turn would retaliate by increasing the duties on those English goods they buy, and also by imposing a differential export duty on iron ore, sulphur ore, silver, lead, copper ore, pit props, timber, wood pulp, etc., which would seriously injure our steel, lead, and chemical industries, our shipbuilding, and our collieries, and would certainly not increase the sale of Lancashire and Bradford soft goods. This would only be following our own foolish example in taxing the export of coal. All the countries with whom we might be at war commercially would retaliate on us by imposing a heavy duty on English coal, and thereby reduce the export of forty-eight million tons, the loss of which on our outward freights would only increase the cost of those things we require to import for the purpose of carrying on our various manufacturing industries. Furthermore, all those countries might put differential duties on all goods imported by British steamers into their countries and colonies. I leave you to imagine how this would affect us in this country as the largest shippers and carriers of the world. I contend, therefore, that Mr. Balfour's policy of Retaliation is not feasible, and cannot be enforced without immense suffering and disturbance. Our trade is so large, so varied, so universal, so far-reaching that commercial war means widespread ruin, and in the interests of the whole community it is our duty to meet it with uncompromising resistance.

Mr. REGINALD McKENNA., M.P. (Monmouthshire—Northern Division), seconded. He said Sir Christopher Furness was a captain of a ruined industry. If all they were told by tariff reformers was true, during the long years of his active career he must have been a pained spectator of the slow dwindling of his undertakings under the baneful influence of free imports. They could only imagine what were the original gigantic proportions of his business by such remains as they saw to-day occupying the intervals of his unemployment. In spite of his bitter personal experience, he remained an impenitent Cobdenite, and in the true spirit of that false and exploded prophet he had been trying to persuade them that afternoon that taxation, even though it was "scientific," did not constitute

prosperity, and that Colonial preference, though the "missionary of Empire" himself preached the gospel, did not make for lasting Imperial unity. It was a remarkable phenomenon, peculiar, he thought, to this country, that so many of their captains of industry had been found fighting in defence of Free Trade. In Germany or the United States, when great manufacturers sought to exercise political influence, it was chiefly in an endeavour to raise duties. They called it defending the home market, but whatever the name, the intention and the effect of the duties was to enable those manufacturers to exploit their fellow-countrymen. No nation ever did or ever could become rich by taxes, but taxes might easily be a means of transferring money from the needy many to the greedy few. All honour was due to those who had refused to cozen and cajole the electorate into consenting to laws which, by raising prices, would filch from the mass of the people some portion of the reward which they now obtained for their labour. The tariff reformer said there would be more employment—two jobs for one man. Mr. Chamberlain understood the painful position of two men for one job. He knew well enough how he could increase his employment, by getting rid of his rival. Two years ago, when this question was sprung upon the public, there was serious ground for alarm; to-day what a different spectacle presented itself. The nation had been instructed in the meantime, and was satisfied to stand by Free Trade. Though the struggle had been a hard one, it had been a great time of revival for the Liberal Party. It had taught the Liberal Party to realise again its own strength, and it had made the nation understand how much the Liberal Party meant for good in the country. The time was coming when they would be able to record their victory at the ballot-box; but they must remain strenuous in their efforts until that moment.

The resolution was then carried unanimously.

Labour and the Unemployed.

Mr. CHARLES FENWICK, M.P. (Northumberland—Wansbeck Division), moved:—

"That this Council is strongly of opinion that immediate steps should be taken to restore to workmen the right of effective combination of which they have recently been deprived by decisions of the Courts. This Council is also of opinion that the State should create permanent machinery applicable to the whole country for investigating and alleviating the lack of employment caused from time to time by exceptional trade depression."

He said the resolution raised two questions of vital importance and interest to the working classes of this country. The right of free and effective combination, which workmen won from Parliament after long years of stress and struggle, had recently, by decisions given in the higher Courts of this country, been very considerably jeopardised and restricted. He quite admitted that the right of effective combination was liable to be abused; but it

ought not to be forgotten that the power to strike and to make collective bargains between the employers on the one hand and the employees on the other was about the only weapon of defence which workmen had to protect themselves against acts of cruelty and tyranny. The situation in which they found themselves as trade unionists was far from satisfactory, and perhaps this state of things was largely due to the apathy and indifference of working men themselves. They were too keen a few years ago on meddling and interfering in other people's business to look after and protect their own, and the position in which trade unionists found themselves to-day was largely the penalty they were paying for the "mafficking" in which they indulged some five or six years ago. No one could deny that the present position was confusing. It was impossible for a layman to say where they were in regard to the law affecting combination, and there appeared to be great conflict of opinion amongst the learned profession as to what the law was. That was a condition of things which ought not to be tolerated. It was a menace to the trade and commerce of the country. It was a condition of things which did not tend towards industrial peace on the one hand, or the cultivation of good relationships and understandings between working men and their employers on the other. So it became of the utmost importance that the Government should come to the assistance of trade unionists in this matter, and help them to restore the law to what it was understood to be prior to the recent decisions of the Courts. As to the second part of the resolution, they were all practically agreed as to the evil itself. The non-employment question was not a simple problem. It was very complex, and was affected from time to time by climatic causes, changes of fashion, by revolutions which were continually going on in the methods of production both at home and abroad; and all these considerations tended to confuse the issue and make the problem very complex. Probably the most they could do was expressed in the words of the resolution. They wanted more permanent machinery, so that when depression came round the workmen might turn to it, and obtain the much-needed assistance. It should be understood that this problem could not be solved by mere proposals of tariff reform. On the contrary, in his judgment, it was more likely to be accentuated and intensified by such remedies. Above all, it should not be made a party question.

Mr. W. H. LEVER (Chairman of the Wirral Liberal Association) seconded. He said it would be a disaster to the country if workmen had no right to effective combination. Effective organisation of labour would give the public the cheapest and best quality of goods, would give the workmen the security to which he was entitled, and give the employer certainty in the conduct of his business, which he otherwise would not have. There ought to be some permanent machinery in this country for dealing with the problem of the unemployed. We

had adopted the system of free education, which was in reality education on the hire system, for when a youth reached manhood he paid for it in his rates and taxes. There was no reason why this principle could not be extended to deal with the unemployed, and even to providing old-age pensions, so long as the funds required were an evenly-adjusted burden on all classes.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

SECOND SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

FRIDAY, MAY 19TH.

The second Session of the Council was held in the Town Hall, at 10.30 a.m. Mr. Birrell, K.C. (President of the Federation), occupied the chair.

Licensing Reform.

The Right Hon. R. B. HALDANE, K.C., M.P. (Haddingtonshire), moved:—

“That this Council strongly condemns the Licensing Act of 1904 as placing new and serious obstacles in the way of Temperance Reform, and declares that the measure should at the first practicable moment be amended, so as to secure (amongst other things) a time limit to the compensation clause, and restoration of the right to refuse licences and impose conditions to a local licensing authority with enlarged powers.”

He said there were doubtless some before him who believed that the resolution was too moderately framed; but he could give them this assurance, that in the minds of those who framed it there was one desire which was not moderate, and that was that the Liberal Party should succeed in doing something practical on this question. For five and twenty years they had been speaking about temperance, and some had spoken with an eloquence and a power that was hardly to be rivalled in the annals of politics. He did not wonder, because they spoke with an inspiration which came from the contemplation of one of the most terrible evils which any nation could have to face. And yet it had come, as a practical result, to very little. There were many who thought, now, that the Liberal Party would have done well had it, thirty years ago, taken the Aberdare programme, and made that a starting point for reforms which would have proceeded step by step and by this time have advanced a very considerable way. Well, the situation was a critical one. And he would tell them why. The Liberal Party was on its trial. As far as anything was certain, in this human, highly contingent world, it seemed certain that after next election the Liberal Party would come back to power, after a long interval, with a strong majority. It had got to deal with the temperance question. It must not fail. He said it was on its trial; and, if that be so, they had carefully to survey the situation. In all these matters the first consideration was to take stock of the obstacles. That was true of politics, as he believed it was true of war, and—as he was told—it was true of love. It was a responsible position for them, because from the point of view of temperance he knew of no alternative to the Liberal Party. Out of the Conservative Party came no good on this matter. Even when they got some good points—and it was a good point that put the beer-house licences on the same footing as the others—the measure was overwhelmed

and crushed down by a multitude of bad points. If they took that Act of last year they got at the secret why the Conservatives could never do anything good in so far as regarded temperance. It was quite true they effected the reform to which he had referred about the beer-houses; they had provided for some reduction of licences; but they provided for a reduction of the existing licences at the expense of putting the rest on a footing of permanence and with a Parliamentary title. Now that he called a bad result, and if they wanted to know why that result came about, they had to look at the genesis, the evolution of this measure. What was its origin? Was it pressure from the Temperance Party? No, it was pressure from quite a different party that brought about that Act; and if they read it through they saw at every point in the Act the effect of the successful pressure of those who wished to establish still more firmly their own vested interests. In considering this question they had to take into account the views of those who were caught by that word "liberty." Liberty was a fine word; but it was the liberty of the good will and not of the bad will that they claimed. They wanted so to reform the State that people who lived in it might be really free. They had to put themselves right, not with the people who believed or those who would never believe, but with the great indifferent mass of the people. They would have to be patient and convince them. They would have to show them that their temperance programme was a really businesslike programme, and that if they voted for it they would be voting for something that was likely to be accomplished. A great man once said that he who wished to accomplish anything must limit himself, and the first thing he (the speaker) submitted was that if they were going to accomplish anything in the field of temperance reform they would have to limit themselves. He would be doing very wrong, and they would be doing very wrong, if they passed that resolution with the idea that they were flouting or setting at naught the splendid efforts of the Temperance Party in the country. It was true that their programme had been in advance of public opinion; it was true that that programme had not succeeded in overcoming prejudices—he thought excessive prejudices—and that vast indifferent class with which they had to deal; but that party had fought and struggled and spoken as a party only could speak that was in the face of a living question. There was a great deal of talk about restoring the efficiency of the nation; but what efficiency would be given to the nation if they could deliver it from the tyranny of drink! One could not cease to admire the self-sacrifice of the men who had banded themselves together for the accomplishment of that great reform, and thrown themselves into the struggle undauntedly and unwearingly through these years; and if they had not succeeded in carrying their programme they had made it possible for the Liberal Party to advance in that direction. In the items of the resolution there was no word that was inconsistent with a growth of public opinion, which might

make their way of looking at things carried into law not less effectively, because preliminary and shorter steps had been taken in the first instance. Local veto was a much more practical conception than some people thought. It was his opinion that local veto, taken in the big sense in which it was popularly understood, was a faggot so thick that it could not be broken across the knee. It would have to be untied and broken stick by stick. In East Lothian there was a large estate called Whittinghame, on which there was local veto, and it was one of the best-managed and most orderly estates in the county. There they had Mr. Balfour a convert to local veto. He (the speaker) had often thought that if the local vetoists had taken concrete illustrations, and applied their local veto to smaller questions in the first instance, they would have educated the public a good deal in that direction. They might have applied the principle to hours of closing or Sunday closing, and this would have taken away the feeling of people who thought their entire liberties were going to be swept away at one stroke. In the resolution they had to face a situation which was more complicated. They could not disguise from themselves the difficulties which would be in the way of even a strong majority. There was the fact that no party could keep up enthusiasm beyond a certain period, and unless a difficult thing was got through early they were apt to lose the steam without which their engine would not go. Secondly, there was the House of Lords, and a third thing which would have to be taken into account was that only twelve months ago Parliament was engaged with the measure which was now law, and had made a great deal of difference to the bad in the situation. Put shortly, the effect of the Act last year was to give something like a freehold title to existing holders of licences. That was a fact they had got to cope with; and they had got the further fact that if in six months from the time the Liberal Party came in there was not the same wave of enthusiasm—and there never was when the party had been in a little time—they ran the risk of interference from the House of Lords; and that raised a situation of very great difficulty. They must meet the Lords on grounds where they could beat them, if the country was strongly enough with them to enable them to beat them, even in the matter of making alterations in an existing Act of Parliament which had been only recently passed. They must start a temperance policy which should be an effective policy. Some of them thought they could see daylight. They could have the introduction of a time limit even where they had got a Parliamentary title such as existed just now. It should be possible, without doing anything unconstitutional, to introduce into the Act of 1900, by way of amendment, a time limit which would leave them after a certain time free to deal with the future as they should have hoped to have been able to deal with it but for that Act, and which also would have put the basis of compensation upon a definite time footing. It would be necessary, in addition, to pay some compensation upon existing

licences if they were not to stand still meantime. Localities should work out their own salvation. If they were to do that, they would require to pay some compensation; and, if they were going to pay some compensation, it must come, not out of the national funds, not out of the rates, but out of further licence duties. There was a first schedule in the Act of last year which enabled magistrates to put certain duties to a limited extent upon existing licences. These ought to be increased, as the money was to be used for diminishing the number of licences, and, therefore, presumably raised the yield of those which remained. They would, by acting in this way, have taken a practical first step, and would have begun the work of educating public opinion. He thought that the licensing authority consisting of the local magistrates in Quarter Sessions required to be remodelled, although he admitted that most of them were disposed to do their work pretty thoroughly. There were, however, exceptions. He had placed before them three points of practical legislation, and the broad principle that underlay them was to free the local authorities to work out their own salvation. There would be one item at least in their party on which they could feel themselves united, and carry the mass of the people with them, so that, if it came to a trial of strength, they would be enabled to say to the House of Lords that the country was with them.

Mr. T. P. WHITTAKER, M.P. (Yorkshire—Spen Valley), seconded the resolution. He said the Act had not settled the temperance problem. The temperance problem remained, and the law could not be allowed to remain as it now stood. It had not settled the compensation question. It had only rendered it essential that it should be settled. Compensation was only tolerable on the distinct understanding that it would be a temporary expedient to get over a temporary difficulty, that it would free the hands of the licensing authorities and extend their power, that it would secure a substantial reduction in the number of licences, and clear the way to effective temperance reform. That Act was partial; it was one-sided; it unduly favoured the trade; it sacrificed the interests of the people; it curtailed and transferred the control of the licensing authority, and, as Mr. Haldane had indicated, it had put a serious obstacle in the way of future effective reform. What the Liberal Party had to show was that they were a constructive party. The problem with which they had to deal was an urgent one. This Act which had been placed on the Statute-book had given an extraordinary legal position to licence-holders, and the longer that Act remained unamended the stronger that position would become. They could not repeal it, but they could revise and recast it, and practically reverse its objectionable features. They must have a time limit put to the operation of the compensation clauses, with provisions which would ensure that at the end of the time limit all licences would become new licences and be issued on conditions

which would secure their full monopoly value for the State. They must make the time limit as short as they could possibly get it. It would depend very much upon the majority they sent to the House of Commons. The full powers of the legal justices must be restored and extended. The compensation levy must be increased; that levy should cease to be a Quarter Sessions area level, and be made national. The basis of compensation should be revised. It was in an unsatisfactory position at the present moment, and the proper way to do it was to provide that that basis of compensation, which was now the difference in the value of the house with the licence and the house without the licence, should be the difference between the amount at which that house was rated with the licence and the amount at which it would be rated without the licence. Then they would have something definite and substantial to go upon. There should be greater power given to the licensing authority as to hours of closing, Sunday closing, early closing on Saturday nights, and in other similar matters. There should also be counter attractions. He did not much care where the money came from, but he would like money to be provided for counter attractions to the public-house. He wanted the Liberal Party to face the question in a spirit of courage. Those of them who were abstainers ought to remember that in this question they were not in a majority. The real key to the question was that they had got to convince the people of the necessity and desirability of every step they wished to take. It was a question which touched the people in their daily habits and old-established prejudices. They could not carry, they could not enforce, legislation unless they had behind them at every stage a majority of the nation. That majority in the very nature of things must largely consist of men who did not look at liquor from their point of view. While they preached the ideal let them always seize the possible. Would they also pardon him if he said a word to non-abstainers? He was heartily sick of the way in which non-abstainers talked and acted, as though the sole or chief duty of grappling with the drink evil in our midst lay upon abstainers. "The evil," he said, "arises from a trade which you defend and which you necessitate and, therefore, justify, and the responsibility of grappling with that evil rests with you. You have been in the past talking to us as though dealing with the liquor question meant some special benefit to us as teetotalers—as though we were going to get something out of it. You told us if we would be good, we could have this; if we would be reasonable, we could have the other. You talk as you would give sweets to a child. The question is yours; the responsibility is yours. We do not necessitate or justify the trade. Were all as we are it would not exist. In the past we temperance folk have done what we could. We may have blundered; we may have erred. What have some of you done? Many of you have stood idly by, doing nothing but criticise and carp, while we were doing our best. I say this in no spirit of recrimination. I am simply urging upon

you, and all of us, that we should realise our responsibilities and our duty in this matter, so that we may unitedly deal with the gigantic evil, and sweep away the stain of a national degradation."

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Education.

Mr. JOHN MASSIE (Treasurer of the National Liberal Federation), moved :—

"That this Council, reaffirming its previous declarations on the education question, declares that no settlement can be permanent or satisfactory which does not secure a national system of education based on effective popular control and management, and freed from religious tests and sectarian influences."

The principles embodied in the resolution, said Mr. Massie, they had sanctioned before, and he made no doubt they would sanction them again; but at the present stage it might be well to say a few words not so much on principles as on practice, by which he meant they should direct their serious attention to the ways in which these principles could, and the ways in which they could not, be brought to good effect. First of all, they were unitedly determined upon an effective popular control; but how was that to be obtained? Not by the mere transmutation of four managers into two and two into four. The authority itself must be reformed. Its representativeness was far too remote: it was too easily, often fatally, counteracted by co-optation; the areas were far too unwieldy; and the authority of the representative council was made futile by the multifariousness of its duties. This control, then, must be directly representative in order that it might be genuine, practical, and effective. In the second place, they were all unitedly determined on the exclusion of religious tests. But it was of no use thrusting them out through the door if they were afterwards to come in at the window; and by this he meant that the secular teacher must not be the sectarian teacher also. In the third place, they were unitedly determined on the elimination of sectarian influences. Sectarian influences had been the ruin of English education. They had been at the bottom of the Act; they had been at the back of its administration. These sectarian influences were like infectious germs. They crept about on the Act, they floated about in the Board of Education, and they positively romped about on the boards of school management. If they were to listen to certain superior persons, indifferent Fabians, philosophic schoolmasters, and sparkling newspaper writers, they would believe that there was no religious difficulty in the schools themselves. Of course, whatever a schoolmaster or whatever a clergyman might teach, it could not be expected that many children between the ages of seven and fourteen would rise up and bear witness against them; but the sectarian influences were in the school all the same. How

could these germs be sterilised? Some had one form of antiseptic, and others had another, and herein was the danger. They would not eliminate these germs by a split among themselves. Mr. John Morley had truly said that the practice of politics was not the attainment of the best, but the submission to the second best, or even the third best. Some of their friends maintained that there was but one just and final solution of the question, and that was State secular education. They cheered that. They should wait and hear what he had to say. He believed with them that it was just; but was it final? Did they expect to have peace? Was it final in the Colonies or in the United States? It might be both just and final; but could they carry it, and could they carry it now, because now was the accepted time? They could not afford to let the sectarian influences of the Education Act have any time more strongly to entrench themselves. They must be swept away; but the only sweeping force was the progressive, the Liberal Party, and if they were to sweep they must be united. It was one thing to say that a solution was just: it was another to say, with a clever journalist, "Let us have what is just at once and be done with it." The only way they could have what was just, in this country, at any rate, was by votes. Could they mass the votes for secular education? He drew their attention to the confusion of counsels, and even the confusion of terms. Secular education to some meant the exclusion of the Bible. Secular education to others meant the admission of the Bible to be read without note or comment. Secular education, to another division, meant selections from the Bible to be taught as literature. Secular education, to still another division, meant extracts from the Bible to be used as the basis of ethical instruction. There were some who would give facilities for sectarian instruction outside school hours. There were others who would open the flood-gates and let in the deluge of sectarianism in school hours, which to him would be the abomination of desolation. There were others who looked with favour upon the School Board system, when it was permitted to the local authority—the School Board—if it liked, to have, under certain limitations, what used to be called simple Bible teaching. That was not logical; but the permission worked, because it was under popular control. He warned them that the party of progress on this particular point was at present divided—healthily divided—in opinion. But it must determine on what it could unite upon. If they could not get what some of them thought to be best, they must not, at any rate, take the worst. The extreme solution was secularisation without the Bible. The worst solution was the entry of all the sects into the schools. Those who insisted on the worst would, in the end, drive them to secularisation, of which he was not afraid. The responsibility would rest on these men, and on them alone. If he could look into the mind of the average voter, he believed that he would take something between the two. The Bible inside the school, the priest outside—that was how the votes

would go. The priest would howl outside, and gnash his teeth as in the outer darkness. But the average voter would placidly say, "Let him gnash, and let him howl." But if they were divided, he would howl inside instead. They could not afford to be split. The forces of reaction had been too long at their evil work. A mountain of mischief had to be removed: the crooked had to be made straight, and the rough places plain. Their task was great; but great was their opportunity. He entreated them, let them not, by disunion, in wanton wastefulness, throw that opportunity away, but rather, by concentration and mutual consideration, see to it that not the voice of the priest, but the voice of the people, should prevail.

Mr. FRANCIS D. ACLAND (prospective Liberal candidate for Richmond Division of Yorkshire) seconded the resolution. He said they intended to go on moving this resolution until it became unnecessary to do so, even though Mr. Balfour should, as he expected he would next year, bring in a Perpetuation Act instead of the Septennial Act, which was now in force. They did not mean to let this question of education beat them. He went on to deal with economy and efficiency in relation to the Act. A good article, of course, was never cheap, and they ought to be spending more than they were on education. He did not complain of the largeness of the sums they were spending, but he did complain of the way in which the money was being spent. He was perfectly certain that day by day there was a great amount of ill-advised expenditure. The chief reason was that all these educational authorities had not yet settled down—and could not settle down, because they knew the whole question must in a very short time be in the melting-pot—and had not mastered the details of administration. Until we had permanence we could not have economy. The State system of block grants, under which good and bad schools received practically the same, was also wasteful. It was better to offer special grants on condition that special efforts were made. The present strain on the taxpayers was making education unpopular, and so long as education was unpopular, so long would they lack a really good educational system. As to efficiency, education must always be far from satisfactory where the system was dual in control, and where the profession of teachers was not thrown open. The dual control meant that it was almost impossible for any authority to get the denominational schools put in a proper state of repair; and the closing of the teaching profession to Nonconformists in so many thousand schools meant that the quality of the education given must continue to lag behind that of other countries.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

SPEECH BY SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN said: The Chairman has made an allusion to a fact which he communicated to me, and which carried joy to my heart. He told me that the time is short. You are rather behind time, and he implied that it was my duty to cut my observations as short as possible. Therefore, I shall not for any length of time clutch this barrier—with which I don't make acquaintance for the first time, but which is an ornament and peculiarity to this hall such as I have never met in any other public place of meeting in the Kingdom. You have been discussing, I understand, licensing and education. They are not new topics. They are rightly put in the very foremost place among the resolutions of this conference. On the licensing question you had Mr. Haldane, who has been travelling day and night to come to you, and is now going to travel day and night to get away from you. He will have given you a well thought-out, philosophical, and at the same time a thoroughly practical view of the question. You have had also Mr. Whittaker here, than whom no one is more sound in his opinions and yet at the same time ready to take a reasonable line when anything is to be got by it. If you listened to these two men you did well. Then you pass on to education. Ladies and gentlemen, what new thing can be said upon education? We know the intricacies of that question by this time; and we know how difficult it will be to solve the problem. But, at the same time, we are not going to be deterred by that difficulty, and we will not rest until we have established in this country a system which deserves to be called national, which causes no grievance on one part of the community more than another, which has no exclusive effect upon those who seek to engage in what Mr. Acland was calling a noble profession, that of teaching. And we will not rest until we have reduced the impediments in the way of that universal desire for the salvation and development—the intellectual development of our people, which I believe is common to us all. Mr. Massie and Mr. Acland are both of them students of this subject, and no men, again, could have been selected better calculated to give you sound advice. Well, ladies and gentlemen, these are two of the things that, if the Liberal party ever comes into power, it must address itself to; and although I am not here to place any one subject in front of any other subject, yet I don't think that anything is more prominent in the desires and feelings and intentions of the mass of Liberals in this country, nothing is in a more prominent position than these two subjects. You will then go on no doubt to deal with other matters. There is plenty for us to do, but it must be done one thing at a time; and I would begin to anticipate the future by expressing the hope that there will be no unreasonable impatience on the part of any Liberals, because the individual matter on which they themselves feel the deepest interest is postponed for a time for some other matter. A little confidence must be shown in the discretion of those who guide the

party. I don't think there need be the slightest suspicion of any desire to shirk any of these subjects, or to slight them, still less to ignore them; and I trust there will not be at any time a sort of scrambling for preference, but that we shall be allowed—with a full consideration of what we know to be the desires of the Liberals throughout the country, and also with adequate consideration of the tactical conditions of this method or of that method—we should be allowed to take up one after the other of these subjects in the order which we think most effective. Ladies and gentlemen, I speak of what we shall do, and what we shall think, but we are not allowed to do or to think anything. These gentlemen who are installed in power, as I told them to their face the other night in the House of Commons, are acting upon a very simple motto—the motto of Marshal MacMahon, “J’y suis, j’y reste,” though I don't think that was very successful in the case of Marshal MacMahon, and I don't think it will do his imitators much good in this country. We are divided between two desires. We wish them to go to the country not only for the purpose of any party advantage, but in order to have an opportunity of beginning to deal with these great questions on what we consider to be sound and wholesome lines. We are anxious, I say, to come to conclusions with the party now in power, and to see who it is the country would wish to see in their places. We are anxious for that, but at the same time at the back of our heads we have another anxiety, and that is that these gentlemen should go on stumbling and blundering as long as possible, in order that when the general election does come the victory will be more complete. Well, we oscillate between these two desires. I don't know when we shall receive such information as shall solve our difficulties in anticipating the future, but in the meantime I congratulate you, and I congratulate the National Liberal Federation and its officers upon the immense success of this gathering at Newcastle—a success in every respect—a success in numbers, a success in spirit and courage, and hopefulness and confidence, and also in the harmony that has prevailed among you; and in the obviously sincere and cordial feeling which has pervaded our friends in Newcastle itself, a feeling of hospitality, and of sympathy, and of devotion to their friends and political brethren who have come from all parts of the Kingdom. To us who work in the House of Commons under somewhat distressing circumstances, unable to do anything when it comes to the point because of the phalanx of followers who are brought in from the lobbies to support whatever the Government says—to us it is refreshing beyond measure to come here and come in contact with the honest straight feeling of our friends in the country. It is you who will save the situation for us. It is you who have given us the proud position in which as a party we now stand, and I trust it will be your wishes which will prevail, if ever we have a chance of influencing again the legislation of the country.

Land Law Reform.

Mr. GEORGE LAMBERT, M.P. (Devonshire—South Molton Division), moved :—

"That this Council regards a right settlement of the questions of ownership, transfer, tenure, and taxation of land as the indispensable condition of any satisfactory scheme of social reform, and in particular as essential to the proper treatment of the growing evils of overcrowding in towns and depopulation of the rural districts, and, while not seeking to enumerate all the reforms which may eventually be proved necessary, this Council considers that the following proposals should receive the immediate attention of Parliament :—

"(1) That a tax be levied on Land Values so as to give the community a share in the monopoly value of land, bring building sites into the market, relieve rates, and lighten the burdens on industry.

"(2) That the Agricultural Holdings Acts of 1883 and 1900 be so amended as to secure to the tenant farmer a statutory right to carry out all improvements suitable to his holding and necessary for its proper working and to obtain compensation for capricious disturbance, and that disputed questions relating to improvements and compensation for improvements or for disturbance be referred to judicial arbitrators.

"(3) That larger and freer powers be given to local authorities and under certain conditions to societies and individuals, to acquire or hire land for letting in small holdings, and for the provision of better housing accommodation for the working classes."

He said that if a working man toiled and moiled year in and year out he got nothing in the way of unearned increment, but the land-owner profited. Large urban estate-owners contributed little to the Imperial revenue before the Finance Act, 1894. Sir William Harcourt made them contribute a little after they were dead, and now a future Sir William Harcourt was wanted who would make them contribute a little while they lived. If good cultivation was required, the capital of the cultivator must be made secure, and the cultivator must be freed from petty tyrannies and persecutions that unfortunately existed. No form of tenure was so good as the charm of owning the land itself. They wanted to increase the number of small holders. The country had been spending money in mad schemes all over the world. It had hunted the Mullah up and down, caught his mother-in-law, and paid £2,500,000 for the privilege. That sum of money would have settled no less than 5,000 cultivators on the land, giving them holdings of 20 acres at £25 per acre. Surely this would have strengthened the Empire far more than squandering treasure in the arid wastes of Central Africa.

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL, M.P. (Yorkshire—Cleveland Division), seconded; and in doing so urged the necessity for social reforms, and amongst the reforms which stood prominent was the land question. It was no artificial question; its urgency was forced upon the nation by the circumstances of the time. The purpose of the reform might be summarised in six words: it was to—provide revenue, cheapen land, encourage building. If they wished to put a stop to the evil of

overcrowding, which ruined the nation body and soul, breeding disease, inviting immorality, provoking intemperance, they must break down the land monopoly and there was no way more effective than taxing land held vacant. They had a good example of the evils of overcrowding in that very neighbourhood. In Newcastle, the last census returned 30 per cent. of the population as living under conditions of overcrowding. In St. Nicholas' Ward, Newcastle, last year the death rate among infants was 570 in a 1,000—more than half the children in that place died before they reached the age of one year; and yet the city engineer reported that there were within the city boundaries 750 acres of land suitable for building, held back from the building market. There they had a clear object-lesson of the supreme urgency of the question.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Electoral Reform and House of Lords.

Dr. T. J. MACNAMARA, M.P. (North Camberwell), moved :—

“That this Council re-affirms its conviction that in order to make Parliament really representative—

(1) The House of Commons must be elected on a broadened and simplified franchise, with no elector voting more than once;

(2) The conditions of election to, and membership of, the House of Commons must be so altered as not in effect to exclude from Parliament the less wealthy of the community; and

(3) The House of Lords must be deprived of its power to mutilate or reject legislative measures which have passed through all their stages in the representative Chamber.”

Speaking of “one man one vote,” he said for one man to have more than one vote was to load the dice against the people. Having detailed the number of pluralists in the Tyneside Division, he asked what would become of Mr. H. C. Smith if the pluralists were swept away? His place, he believed, would be taken by the gentleman who was to second the resolution. Mr. Smith was not the representative of the majority of the Tynesiders; he was the representative of the minority, reinforced by owners with interests, and properties, and votes, and residences elsewhere. It was a shameful prostitution of the principle of representative institutions. Part of the policy of democratisation, which he was advocating, would be the early reform in the incidence of the cost of elections. The cost of elections should not fall upon a poor man; it ought to be a public charge. They should give up the silly fiction that because a man was born the son of a peer, therefore necessarily God Almighty had endowed him with a legislative capacity.

Mr. J. M. ROBERTSON (Prospective candidate for Northumberland—Tyneside) seconded the resolution. Referring to the speech of Dr. Massie, he said only the just could become final amongst them. Dr. Macnamara had adopted the right course in setting up the simple standard of justice for application. The broad, simplified franchise must be adult

suffrage, which should include women's suffrage. They might be told they were not ready for women's suffrage. Let them get ready. The House of Lords represented a ridiculous and unjust principle. The King, who represented the hereditary principle, had no power to interfere with legislation ; but the House of Lords, which occupied a place where it was far less capable of being impartial, had almost boundless power for evil.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

Women's Disabilities.

Mr. LEIF JONES, M.P. (Westmorland—Appleby Division) moved :—

“That in the opinion of this Council the disabilities at present attaching to women by reason of sex, in the matters of the parliamentary suffrage and of election to local bodies, should be removed.”

He said this was the first time that an official resolution in favour of women's enfranchisement had been moved at a meeting of the National Liberal Federation. If there were any there who wished to exclude women from the franchise, it was for them to justify the exclusion. In a free country the only grounds on which any class or section could be excluded from the vote were, in the words of Mill, “personal unfitness or public danger.” It seemed to him monstrous that any Liberal should urge either of these reasons against the franchise being conferred upon women. Parliament was being called upon more and more to regulate the conditions under which women laboured in different industries, and it was just and necessary in the interests of women that they should have a voice in the making of the laws under which they lived and worked. They needed all the brains, all the capacity, all the higher, finer emotions of the nation to solve the social problems that confronted them. The measure would not only remove a grievous injustice from women, but would be fruitful of good to the whole community.

Mr. P. W. BUNTING (Vice-President of the South St. Pancras Liberal Association) briefly seconded the motion, which was carried by an overwhelming majority.

Vote of Thanks to Newcastle Liberals.

Mr. EDWARD EVANS (Chairman of the Committee of the National Liberal Federation) moved :—

“That the best thanks of this Council be tendered to the President of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal Association and his colleagues, and to the officers and members of the Reception Committee for their excellent arrangements in connection with the visit of the Federation to Newcastle, also to Mr. Thomas Cairns and Mrs. Cairns, and to the Right Worshipful the Mayor (Mr. Alderman J. Baxter Ellis) and the Mayoress, and the officers and Committee of the Liberal Club for their generous hospitality.”

He said the Newcastle friends had looked after them well. They had particularly admired the courage of the Mayor, who had given them such a hearty welcome.

The EARL OF ABERDEEN seconded the motion, which was carried by acclamation.

Mr. WILLIAM ANGUS (President of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal and Radical Association) responded, and the business of the Council terminated.

MEETING IN PALACE THEATRE,

MAY 19TH, 1905.

On Friday evening a mass meeting was held in the Palace Theatre. The theatre was crowded, 5,000 persons being present, and the proceedings were throughout enthusiastic. The chair was taken by Mr. William Angus (President of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal and Radical Association).

The CHAIRMAN said that, on behalf of the Newcastle Liberals, he had to offer to the National Liberal Federation, to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and to the Liberal leaders a very hearty welcome. Their welcome had a touch of humility and gratitude. They had not deserved that visit. On former occasions they felt that they could face their leaders without shame. In 1891 Newcastle was in the front rank of progressive cities. Its fidelity to Liberal principles under trying circumstances had entitled it to take the position which had been vacated by Manchester and Birmingham. In this city Mr. Gladstone delivered one of his greatest later speeches, and the programme of the Liberal Party was called by the name of the city. Mr. John Morley was then their member. They in Newcastle had judged themselves unworthy of these high honours. They had participated with the rest of the country in its folly, and they shared its punishment. They hoped they were not precluded from its repentance. They felt that they were returning to the ancient paths of progress. The Liberal Party should be ready for the days of prosperity, for it had taken bitter lessons in the school of adversity. Liberals should learn to trust one another. Now had come their opportunity. All who did their duty deserved their gratitude. Their warmest thanks were due to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who commanded their little army in the House of Commons. No Tory encroachment was allowed to pass unchallenged, no Liberal position was undefended. They had taunts and insults, gibes and jeers, misrepresentations and cruel slanders were hurled at them all, but the deadliest shafts were aimed specially at their leader. His position deserved sympathy. His character commanded respect. From magnanimous foes his courage would have won admiration, but the day was theirs and they acted after their nature. Mrs. Beecher Stowe said that there were some men who never respected you until you knocked them down, and he fancied there were some

of Sir Henry's prominent opponents in the House of Commons after recent encounters who respected him very highly indeed. If they were not so solicitous for the welfare of the country, if they cared more for the punishment of those who had treated them so shamefully, the present situation would have afforded them infinite satisfaction. The Liberal Party had not come in sight of the promised land without having learned some of the lessons of the wilderness. They were disciplined and united.

SPEECH BY SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, M.P., *who met with an enthusiastic reception, said :—*

Mr. Chairman, Lord Aberdeen, Ladies and Gentlemen,—Never since it came into being has that great political engine, the National Liberal Federation, found itself at its annual meeting in such circumstances as now surround you. I go further, and say that never within the memory of any man among us has the country seen such a political situation. This is a constitutional country. (A Voice: It used to be.) Well, we thought it was, but the close observer of recent events may well begin to have his doubts. The form of government under which we live is that of a limited monarchy. The power of the Crown, wisely exercised, cheerfully and loyally obeyed, sincerely respected, and endeared to us by gratitude for faithful practice, is yet subject to restriction.

The Will of the People.

What is the power that restricts it? It is the will of the people. It is not the *fiat* of a Minister, it is not the wishes or ambitions or interests of any junta or *coterie* of politicians. And how is the will of the people expressed? By the election of representatives to serve in Parliament, whether at a general election or by-elections. Therefore—and this is my point—the authority which places and maintains a Ministry in power is not the House of Commons; it is something behind it and above it. The authority originates with and resides in the popular will, or, in plain language, in public opinion. Yet here we have a Minister declaring that he cares nothing for the opinion of the country; he does not look beyond the actual House of Commons. The House of Commons behind whose support he shelters himself is nearly five years old; it was created amid a war fever which has long since passed away, and the votes which created it were sought and were given on the ground of that war and on that ground alone. So that this five-years-old House of Commons has less authority by far than Parliaments of its age usually have, and every passing election proves indisputably and undeniably that a profound and sweeping change has come over the feeling of the electorate. What is the plain duty of a Minister in such a case? This is not a matter for fine-drawn statecraft. It is a matter of common sense.

A Government of Usurpation.

Let us try it by the rules of everyday life. Suppose that A gives a power of attorney to B to act for him, and that in process of time it becomes apparent to everybody concerned that A has lost his confidence in B, and no longer approves of the way in which B conducts his affairs. A acts through an agent who takes no notice. What, then, will be the duty of B, whom I assume to be a man of probity and honour; what will he do? He will refuse to take advantage of any technical plea, and will renounce duties which he can no longer honestly discharge in accordance with the wishes of his principal. It comes to this, then, that we have in office a Government of usurpation, such as we have not had in any man's experience before. Is Government altogether the right word? We are a plain, practical people, and what we mean by a Government is a body of men with a common policy, acting altogether in order to put that policy in practice by the aid of a majority in Parliament.

The Government's Policy.

What is the present Government's policy? I take three questions which they themselves have brought to the front. That is treating them fairly, surely. What is their fiscal policy? What is their Irish policy? What is their Army policy? With regard to the Army, we have had an elaborate exposition of and disquisition upon the theories of Imperial defence. But we are just as much in the dark as ever as to the way in which these theories are to be carried out or the requirements which they impose upon us. Of their fiscal policy we only know this—that it is in a condition which precludes its appearance in public. They cannot state it, they cannot defend it, and they cannot even vote upon it in the House of Commons. They cannot set it on its legs. The Government becomes dissolved whenever the subject is mentioned. As to Ireland, a week ago I ask a few plain questions—not conundrums—mere questions as to matter of fact, and I not only received no answer, but no attempt at an answer. The strange story of Sir Antony MacDonnell remains a mystery. The sudden change from coercion to conciliation, which happened to take place just at the time when the Government required the votes of the Irish members for their education policy—it was a singular coincidence,—the abrupt abandonment of that policy of conciliation at the first growl of the ascendancy party, the marvellous result of Mr. Wyndham out and Mr. Balfour still in—all these are unexplained. The Government commands the confidence of its followers in the House of Commons—which is its only excuse for continued existence—by the consistent concealment of its policy from Parliament and from the country.

Mr. Chamberlain's Dark Room.

You may have observed that some days ago there was a discussion in the House of Commons upon the amount of accommodation provided for members, and the fact was discovered that the member

for West Birmingham enjoys the use of a room although he is not at the head of any distinct political party. I do not grudge him that favour; but it was urged in extenuation of his occupation of it that it was a small, dark room, by which I suppose was meant very much what an enterprising and advertising hotel-keeper in a picturesque country by way of attracting the amateur photographer would call a developing-room. The very thing he wants! He is busy developing something. It was also a dark room, and that appears to be suitable also; and—I was forgetting this—it was said to be in a detached part of the building, also a very suitable location. But the House of Commons itself is, on critical occasions, a large, dark room, and the confidence of the supporters of the Government is never so enthusiastically voted as when the gas goes out.

The Government's Reluctance to go to the Country.

I would ask you, is this what the country has been accustomed to? A feeling of surprise and bewilderment has grown into another feeling, a feeling of irritation and indignation scarcely paralleled in our history. Here is a Ministry for which, as the chairman has reminded you, not a single constituency is safe, and, if they reconstruct themselves, which they do now and then, they have either to go to the House of Lords for a new Minister or they have to sacrifice a Minister in the operation. No wonder then that last Session they put into the King's Speech a Bill to dispense with the necessity of a newly-appointed Minister seeking re-election. When they talked of that Bill we wondered why they were so full of this novel zeal for liberty. Now we know the reason. Let us give them full credit for this unique instance of foresight on their part. But when, sooner or later, this cryptic Government, with no support except that which it can find in the doomed members of an expiring House of Commons, when they go to the country what will they say? Their reluctance to go we can well understand on three grounds at least. There is their record, which will not bear a moment's inspection; there are their ranks, which are deeply divided and demoralised; they have no definite policy except a few strings of phrases which can hardly be put seriously before the world.

Abuse of the Opposition.

Knowing, then, defeat to be certain they are clinging to office in the hope that somehow or other they will achieve some degree of union, and that they may develop some sort of a policy, so that defeat may not turn into a catastrophe. But in the meantime the May meetings of the party—I especially refer to the Primrose League meeting at the Albert Hall and Mr. Chamberlain's meeting with his own constituents at Birmingham—show that they are agreed that the best way of keeping up appearances is to denounce the Opposition. To read their speeches one would think that the Union Jack was emblazoned with the counterfeit presentment of the Prime Minister, and that the Royal Arms contained, instead of a unicorn, an ex-Colonial

Secretary rampant. Says Mr. Balfour to his audience and friends, "We are the defenders of the Crown, the Empire, and religion." He actually appears to take seriously the comedy of the Primrose League. And the same day Mr. Chamberlain, at Birmingham, rounded it off by remarking, putting all the vinegar—three kinds of vinegar—into one vessel, that the Liberal party was a party of Little Englanders, pro-Boers, and separatists. Have they learned nothing, these men? Has their South African policy commended itself to the country? Are they bent on reviving the passions of 1900? Are their eyes not open to the fact that the great majority of their countrymen condemn that policy? Do they seriously think that abuse of the Irish will be effective? Mr. Chamberlain, referring to the Irish Nationalists, said in a casual way, "Mr. Bright called them rebels." I do not recall a more ungenerous thing ever said by a public man in this country—dragging in an honoured memory to justify a slander. Why, if Mr. Chamberlain wishes to abuse his political opponents, let him do it himself in his own words. But how absurd this sort of thing is. The one clear impression left on the public mind by their language and their policy is that the Irish were right in what is called rebellion, in attacking and seeking to deliver themselves from the system of Government under which they live and the unhappy results which have followed from it.

Mr. Chamberlain's Mistake.

I am inclined to think that Mr. Chamberlain is mistaken in his conception that the records of a Government count for nothing in an appeal to the electors. Political memories are not quite so short as that. The country has an account to settle with him and his friends, and the longer it is deferred the heavier it will be. That he is not without misgivings on this score is evident, because he called attention to the fact that before the fiscal question was introduced their losses at the by-elections were greater than they have been since. Their misdeeds were more vividly before the eyes of the electors. Yes, but as the smoke of this fiscal controversy clears away—and there are a good many people I suspect, even tariff reformers, who would not be unduly distressed if it ended in nothing but smoke—when the smoke clears, so much more plainly will the track of the last ten years appear. I leave the matter there. Let them get what comfort they can and what shelter they can from their denunciation of the iniquities of the Opposition, past, present, and to come.

The Agricultural Rates Bill.

But we received some commendation from the Prime Minister the other day. That is worse; it makes one examine oneself to see what can be wrong. It is true there was a good deal of irony in the way in which he communicated his commendation; but he did commend us because of our not having opposed the second reading of the two great masterpieces of his legislative programme for this Session, the Agricultural Rates Renewal Bill and the Aliens Bill. Let me say, if

you will, a few words upon each of those. For our inaction in both of those cases there are excellent reasons. There was nothing inconsistent in what we did—inconsistent with previous views. Take the Agricultural Rates Bill first. The original Bill was introduced in 1896. We were strongly opposed to it and we strenuously resisted it, and we have not altered by one hair's breadth our opinion upon the subject. We object to taking agricultural land and conferring benefits upon its owners at the expense of other people; and there was no fact concerning it which was more startling and convincing than this—that the City of London—not the little City, I mean the big City, London generally—is out of pocket annually £300,000 by this provision, and receives no benefit or equivalent for it. There had been a general enquiry by a Royal Commission, and there was what they call an interim report, which recommended this special favour to be shown to a particular kind of property, whereas the whole question cries aloud for reform and readjustment. We succeeded in getting a period put to the time when the Bill should last. In 1901 it had to be renewed. We adopted exactly the same position then as we have adopted this year. Procedure by way of repeal or non-renewal is impracticable.

The Need of Comprehensive Rating Reform.

These doles, as we call them, must be renewed until that can be carried out which the Government have promised, but have failed to execute—namely, a comprehensive measure readjusting the whole system of local taxation, dealing with urban and rural rates alike, and with relations of each to the national Exchequer. However arbitrary, however inequitable and indefensible, in our opinion, the present temporary law is, these doles cannot be removed after all these years by mere surgical excision. It is easier to do mischief of this sort than to remedy it. The only practical way of dealing with the question is to approach it, as we shall be able to do, from a wider standpoint altogether. The task is heavy and complicated, perhaps the heaviest task that lies before any Government, to frame a scheme that shall be fair to the country and fair to the town, fair to agricultural interests and fair to other interests, to the ratepayer and to the taxpayer, out of the bewildering and puzzling mosaic of present rating arrangements; but, whatever its difficulties, it is a branch of reform which no Government, certainly no Government sincerely concerned about trade, about the housing question, and about the land question, can possibly ignore or neglect.

The Aliens Bill.

Now I pass to the Aliens Bill, which is a case much simpler. Why did I, who voted for an amendment to the Aliens Bill last year, decline to vote for a similar amendment this year? That you will naturally ask. Because it is a different Bill altogether from last year's. The Government have taken out of it some of the vices which we detected and denounced in the Bill of last year. I have never objected on principle to regulating the admission into this country of

undesirable men, of criminals, of diseased persons, of persons who are diseased morally, physically, or mentally. But there are two important points on which we shall certainly insist—the first that no man shall be excluded on the mere ground of poverty, and the second that there shall always be maintained admission for anyone who seeks an asylum on our shores from persecution, whether political or religious. A breach of these conditions would mean a loss of character not merely to the Government or to the Opposition, but to the nation itself. We can take no narrow view of national hospitality, if for no other reason than that our countrymen make such large use of and so freely benefit by the hospitality of other nations. We shall look for the support of the Prime Minister against the view of Mr. Chamberlain, who puts aside these excuses of disease and crime, and claims as the chief object, and merit, of this legislation the exclusion of the competitive labour of the poor man. Has not the alien in past years contributed most materially to the prosperity of this country without displacing native labour? The Royal Commission which was appointed on the subject distinctly says that, so far as skilled labour is concerned, there has been no such displacement of labour. I should have had more respect for this view of the question if I had not remembered that those who are so strong against admitting the deserving but poor alien to this country are the men who introduced Chinese into South Africa for the mere sake of cheapness, and also if I saw in that party solicitude for the interests of labour in other respects, and especially for restoring the combination laws to the position in which Parliament originally intended them to be.

Two Other Government Bills.

Well, these are the facts regarding these two Bills; and I do not grudge the Prime Minister any satisfaction he can derive from our attitude upon them. But besides these two in this Session there are only two other Bills in their programme to which I think I need refer. They seem to be in no hurry to carry either of them. There is the need of organised help for the unemployed, urgently required in all industrial centres, and, above all, in the East-end of London, and surely this will not be put off until another winter comes upon us. The second is the question of the deplorable ecclesiastical calamity in my own country across the Tweed, which demands instantly and urgently an equitable settlement. Why are the Government not ready to act? It is no party question; we are all agreed; we have striven and strained ourselves to prevent any element of party feeling in it. It was evident months ago that an Executive Commission would be required; the Commission of inquiry reasonably and properly recommended such an appointment. The recommendation was so obvious that it ought to have been the duty of the Government to prepare a Bill in anticipation of it. Every day's delay not only continues but aggravates the scandal; and Scotland is grievously afflicted in her highest and dearest and tenderest interest, the spiritual welfare of her people.

Liberal Policy.

We are taunted also by the leaders of the Government party with having no policy. We may ask, as I have been asking by way of recrimination, what is their policy? I have already said that their policy is vague and intangible; and I find myself in extremely good company in making an observation to that effect, because what said Mr. Chamberlain the other day? "Have they," that is the Liberals, "have they a policy? What have we got?" he said. "Have we any definite, distinct, beneficial policy? Our policy is not so clear as it might be." He goes on: "We must have a common object worth fighting for"; and so he casts about to find a common object, and he apparently can think of nothing but the Imperialistic idea; and, finding this rather thin and nebulous, he falls to belabouring the Liberals again. Why did he not fall back on his old friend old-age pensions? But would it not be *à propos*, would it be impertinent, to inquire what has become of the pledges and promises of social constructive reform which ten years ago were paraded as a policy, with great profit to the Unionist party, but with none whatever either to those who in the simplicity of their heart believed in those promises, or to the country which, on the other hand, has been scourged from that day to this with a number of policies that were never heard of either in 1895 or 1900? If these eminent persons, however, took the trouble to read the speeches made by their opponents, they would have seen that our policy, so far from being a policy of negation, as Mr. Balfour said, or a non-existing policy, as Mr. Chamberlain said, is a positive and constructive policy.

Undoing the Work of Reaction.

No doubt much will have to be done to repair the false steps that have been taken when we have the power to do it. We must try to settle the education question on national and liberal lines; and no one can deny it wants settling, with Wales and East Ham and the West Riding of Yorkshire under our eyes. Then we must restore public control of the liquor traffic. We must do what we can to check the upward movement of the public expenditure; but we shall not be satisfied with these tasks. Still less shall we be satisfied to do what I sometimes see suggested that we should do—namely, to stand still and mark time till the last danger is passed of the revival of Protection. I have already mentioned one great subject, that of rating, which is urgent. In that must be included the taxation of urban site values, a reform for which our great municipalities are agitating and almost clamouring. This principle has been three times affirmed in the House of Commons; and I expect, though I have not received information, it has been affirmed a fourth time to-day, when a Scotch Bill dealing with the subject was under discussion in the House of Commons; and its effect, we believe, would be not only to place urban rating on a more equitable footing, but greatly to facilitate the solution of the problems of housing and of urban expansion.

The Rural Problem.

No less urgent is the whole range of questions connected with the depopulation of the agricultural districts. To say that the well-being, and, indeed, almost the existence of the nation is endangered, is threatened, by this process of sapping is no exaggeration. We hold that measures are required for extending the facilities for small holdings and for the erection of cottages, that tenant farmers are entitled to a larger liberty in the cultivation of their farms and greater security in the result. (A voice—"What about civil and religious liberty?") Well, civil and religious liberty I take for granted; we will not forget the principles and rules of civil and religious liberty when we are dealing with education or any other subject of a cognate type. With regard to cottages and small holdings, which are powerful agents in stemming the current which is carrying men into the towns, I say that should it happen that the local authorities, either through social pressure or from any other cause, are unlikely to take a sufficiently strenuous part in administering such legislation and thereby combating an evil of national gravity, we ought not to shrink from adopting a policy of vigorous stimulation from the centre. We are all for encouraging local administration and responsibility; but whether it be in respect of the acquisition of land for the use of the people or the provision of cottages, or, to turn in another direction, the sanitary condition of cities as disclosed in their death-rates, the duty of proclaiming and enforcing a proper standard of administrative activity and efficiency will have to be undertaken a good deal more energetically by the State than it has been in the past. We must remember that there are interests of a kind so formidable in their social prestige and influence and in their financial power that the citizen may often have to forfeit a good deal of his rights and liberty unless he can count upon the central authority standing up for him.

The Combination Laws.

Again, what could be more important to the prosperity and contentment of the people than a revision of the combination laws? You may take a large and favourable view, or a less favourable view of the trade unions as you like—for my part I hold them to be an unqualified good of the country—but whatever view men take of them no one wishes them, surely, to be hustled and harried. Yet witness the deplorable spectacle of the last few weeks, when a Bill, imperfectly reviving the original intention of Parliament in this matter, has been so mauled and maimed in the Committee under the inspiration of the Government, led and represented by their Solicitor-General, that the Labour members and the Liberal members have been obliged to leave the room.

Electoral Reform.

These are some of the things to be done. I know there are many others of almost equal importance, which I could mention; but I will only refer to one other great class of reforms, perhaps the most

essential, because the most elementary of all. I mean those affecting the electoral machinery; reforms for facilitating registration, for making individual right and not property the test and ground of qualification, for cheapening elections, for giving to members of Parliament a modest stipend, so as to enlarge the choice of the electors. Then, when those things have been done, and other reforms which I might mention, a true representative people's Chamber would be constituted, strong enough to join issue with any other Chamber which challenged it. There would be the additional advantage in those things I have named, that it would be healthier for the country and for Parliament itself if elections came oftener than they do, and until you cheapen the cost of elections you can never accomplish that object.

History Repeating Itself.

This is no conclusive list; I am not here either to frame or to propound any programme whatever. I have far from exhausted the subjects. How history repeats itself! Could the condition of things at the present time be better described than they were by Mr. Gladstone when he came here in 1891, and, as we were told yesterday, was entertained by your present mayor in his mayoralty? What was it that he then said? He said: "The first difficulty that encounters me is this—a surfeit; for there is no other word adequate to describe it: it is not the excess merely, it is the absolute surfeit of work that remains to be done: work that accumulates from year to year, and work that is certain to fall more heavily in arrear in proportion to the prolongation of the rule of a Tory Government."

Liberalism and Labour.

I would have you observe this further thing. Cast your mind back upon what I have been speaking about. Is there one of those things upon which there is any material difference between Liberal ideas and the ideas of those who directly represent labour in Parliament? Not one. Any seeming difference would at once dry up and disappear the moment we came to work together upon them. There is no reason why these two branches of the party of progress should not work harmoniously together. For my part I can honestly say that I have never heard upon any Liberal platform anything but sympathy and welcome expressed towards Labour members. If I have to my regret seen reported unfriendly things as having been said of the party to which I belong by prominent Labour politicians, I am confident that with patience and experience of one another any such feeling will evaporate.

The Fiscal Question.

Let me ask you to go with me to the subject which has most occupied public attention for the last two years. How do we stand with regard to the great fiscal question? I hold that we may claim to look both forward and backwards with a certain measure of cheerful

assurance. The Protectionists have been beaten in argument; they have been routed at the by-elections; in the House of Commons they have been made to commit happy dispatch themselves. But we cannot lay down our arms until the Unionist party has formally separated itself from any schemes which directly or indirectly prejudice freedom of trade. They are far from having done this yet. Personally I would welcome a recantation even before a general election came on, because we have plenty of other issues to meet. We cannot for a moment relax our vigilance. Do not be blindly confident; do not be blind to the manœuvres now going on, or the likelihood that they are leading up to some small and innocent-looking electoral instalment on account. Never mind if we are denounced as bigots and fanatics for insisting that the Free-trade position should be held intact. A general may have been foiled in his frontal attack and yet manage to effect a lodgment by a side way or a back way, and he will then think his foe was a very good sort of fellow and a very open-minded one to oblige him by allowing him to do so. But what comfort will it be, when the citadel has fallen, for the unwary defender to reflect that his defence was conducted in no antiquated spirit of obstinacy or intolerance?

Unionist Manœuvres.

What is the nature of these manœuvres going on? We can only look from a distance and guess. We all remember the extraordinary campaign started two years ago, when the pioneer went out in advance under the flag of food taxation and preference with the blessing, the best wishes, and the warm sympathy of the commander of the main army, who contented himself with the humbler and less brilliant rôle of preparing at his leisure to annul, delete, and cancel the established and cardinal principle that taxation should be only for revenue purposes. I am not sure, on the whole, that the noisy and blatant vanguard is so likely to have done so much harm as the quieter and more insidious part of the army that remained. The pioneer included in his operations this very city on Tyneside, and it was to this city, and it may have been in this very house for aught I know—"No, the one you are going to")—I am glad that it was not—that he bequeathed the deathless picture of the annihilation of all our industries, the extinction of our fires, the stoppage of all our exports; while, marvellous to say, the imports were to continue coming in just as usual. What an odd thing it is that a clear and level-headed man like Mr. Chamberlain never realises apparently that trade is barter, and that if things go out other things must come in, and if things come in other things must go out. That was an unrivalled picture, but the glamour of it and of the triumph of his progress gradually faded away. Calamity overtook them; and now the chief preoccupation of that army appears to be, not to equip itself with arms of offence, but rather they have been concerned with the exigencies present and prospective of the ambulance department.

The Design of the Ambulance Waggon. ✓

They are too stricken, too prostrate, to go to the country otherwise than in a recumbent position ; and the deputation to Downing-street that we heard of, and the apparently incomplete negotiations of which we hear so much from time to time, only betoken some little differences between the authorities as to the design and decoration of the ambulance waggon. Mr. Chamberlain would, no doubt, like to have a fiery cross, Mr. Balfour would prefer a red cross or a cross of some neutral colour, but at any rate something which would appeal to Free-traders not to fire upon it ; and the announcement which the country waits for with expectation and some amusement will tell us whether a combination of the two crosses is possible. There is no Geneva Convention for a political campaign. If Mr. Chamberlain's quick-firing gun and Lord Lansdowne's big revolver form part of the equipment of this melancholy procession when once it sets out on its way such concealment would be deserving of no greater reprobation than the prolonged policy of evasion and concealment and dissimulation of which the country has grown so heartily sick. If at this time of day you and I are deceived by any new formula, any freshly-discovered device for dressing up Protection in Free-trade garments, we shall have ourselves to blame. I fear little myself from any such concordat that may be devised. Supposing they do come to terms on the basis of the Sheffield and Glasgow programme, a concordat so spectral and unsubstantial will fail to consolidate their party or drive a wedge into the party of Free Trade.

Mr. Chamberlain and the Trade Unionists.

Two nights ago Mr. Chamberlain again appeared, waving the fiery cross. The old fallacies and the old promises were trotted out again. Having secured the gentlemen of the Tariff Reform League, he now addressed himself to the trade unions and the workmen generally. He says to them that a great deal, after all, depends on what you think of the man who is addressing you. That is very true ; and those who are asked to consent to dearer food on his pledge that the cost of living will not be increased will not forget the old-age pensions proposals which were "so simple" that anybody could understand them. This new scheme is also described as simple, but those will be even more simple who are taken in by it. He goes on to say that he has no personal interest to serve. Who ever said he had a personal interest ? I am not aware that it has ever been alleged by anyone. And he says he is a mere consumer ; but are the people about him mere consumers ? Are the members of his tariff commission nothing but consumers ? Do none of them stand to gain by the proceedings in which they are engaged ?

The Colonies and Mr. Chamberlain.

Having thus cleared his character from an imputation never made, he appeals to the working man. First, he interlards his appeal with higher and wider themes. He brings up the heavy artillery to which

we are so accustomed, but the roar of which has never intimidated us—namely, the grand Imperial idea. “The Colonies,” he says, “helped us in the war, shall we reject and insult them now?” I would not reject and insult anybody, much less the Colonies. I give the Colonies credit for good feeling, for loyalty, and for good sense, and for a proper estimate of their own independence. The idea that their own independence, the idea that their loyalty depends upon trade advantages is the worst of insults. I think I once called it myself “a squalid idea.” I repeat that it is a squalid idea. It has often been flung at my head and they can go on flinging it. What do the Colonies themselves say of this? We hear so much of what Mr. Chamberlain thinks about the Colonies, let us see what the Colonies think about Mr. Chamberlain. Here is a quotation from an article in the *Toronto Globe* of April 12th, which is the principal Ministerial organ in Ontario:—

“By what authority does Mr. Chamberlain pose as interpreter of Canadian sentiment and ambition? What has he seen of Canada, and what does he know of Canadian feelings, that he should talk about the endangering of Canadian loyalty? Does he measure Canadian loyalty by an extra five per cent. or ten per cent preference on Canadian wheat, or is he trying to ‘bunco’ the British elector into the adoption of Protection with a bogey game of Colonial dismemberment? A man who visited the United States again and again, but only once, even when Colonial Secretary, deigned to touch Canadian soil, is in no position to estimate either the quality or the strength of Canadian sentiment. It would be well for Mr. Chamberlain were he to base his Protective propaganda on the needs and interests of the British taxpayer, rather than the fickleness of Canadian loyalty. Imperialistic tuft-hunters may submit, but the point will soon be reached when intelligent and self-respecting Canadians will resent the persistent misrepresentation of Canadian sentiment by British politicians. One of our chief humiliations is the tone of men like Mr. Chamberlain, who think we are bound to the Empire by ties of trade preference.”

Mr. Chamberlain's Fallacies and Contradictions.

Now, when he turns to his appeal to the workmen, we see instance after instance in his speeches of contradictory statements on the financial question. He praises high tariff countries, and says “the conditions of life in Germany are such that many an English working-man would be glad to change places with some of his German competitors.” I would interpolate, How does it come to pass that at the last election in Germany there was a huge number—I think something like one-half of the votes—which were given for Socialist candidates on the very ground that the exactions of the rich and of the State made their life almost intolerable? But now I have quoted what he says in commending life in Germany to the British working-man. What does he say himself when he is talking of aliens in that same speech—“If the aliens were not allowed to come to England they would stop in Germany and the products of their cheap labour would come in their stead.” Thus Germany is, in the same speech, a workman's paradise and a country where goods are produced cheaply by sweating and unfair conditions. Surely it cannot be both. Again,

he makes his appeal to the workmen by the promises of more employment; but if his ten per cent. duty on manufactured goods results in their exclusion, his arguments based on increased revenue—the foreigner paying our taxes and even, as we have now been told, our rates—fall to the ground; if, on the other hand, it does not keep them out, then where is the increased employment to come from? Our position with regard to this—and it is worth while to repeat it and revive our apprehension of it—is that any artificial steps taken for increasing the price of commodities is bound in the long run to reduce the opportunities for employment. Here and there it may benefit a single or particular trade by giving it a greater command of the home market. Take pearl buttons, referred to by one in the audience, for instance; or sugar refining—we have not heard so much of sugar refining since the effect of the Sugar Convention made itself felt, and large numbers of operatives in the confectionery trade were added to the ranks of the unemployed. Our contention is that, taking our home produce and our exports together, anything that arbitrarily raises the cost of production must re-act to the prejudice of the workman, and this for the simple reason, which we can never persuade Mr. Chamberlain to consider, that a diminution of the effective demand for commodities means a restriction of the employment of labour. If a man has to pay more for his boots or clothes, what is the effect upon him? He will economise in boots and clothes, he will not buy so many. How is that going to give more work to the bootmaker or the tailor? This is a plain argument quite apart from all those high-flying economic theories with which—and in this I agree with Mr. Chamberlain—the ordinary mind and the ordinary man might only be confused.

The Real Remedies.

I commend those plain arguments to you who are workmen and to others. The way to improve our trade is by other methods altogether, first, by lightening the burden of taxation through a peaceful and frugal policy; secondly, by better education and more drastic control of the liquor traffic; thirdly, by improving the character and stamina of our people by reform of the deplorable surroundings in which masses of them live; and lastly, by giving agriculture a chance, by giving the farmers security, and offering the labourer a career in his calling. It is in such directions as these that will be found the redemption of our social system, and not by restricting trade and by following the will-o'-the-wisp of baseless fallacies and mischievous and delusive promises.

Thanks to Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman and Liberal Policy.

MR. BIRRELL moved the following resolution :—

“That this meeting accords its warmest thanks to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman for his presence and speech to-night, assures him and his colleagues of the loyal confidence of the Liberal Party, endorses the resolutions adopted by the Council of the National Liberal Federation at its meetings in Newcastle-on-Tyne and pledges itself to help in securing the triumph of Liberal principles by the return of the Liberal party to power whenever the present Government has the courage to submit itself to the judgment of the constituencies.”

MR. W. S. ROBSON, K.C., M.P. (South Shields), seconded the resolution, which was enthusiastically carried.

Vote of Thanks to Chairman.

The **EARL OF ABERDEEN** moved a vote of thanks to the Chairman, and said they might add their congratulations on his having occupied the chair at such a meeting. He had been asked, what was the use of Liberals demonstrating? If there was political darkness and political night there was all the more reason for upholding a flaming torch for declaring their principles. It was monstrous that a man like Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman should be assailed with the villainous epithets which had been applied to him. It would not hurt Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, and, if anything, it would increase the ardour of the support given him. But it was not creditable and not desirable, because it tended to lower the tone of public life. That great meeting formed a splendid climax to the proceedings of the National Liberal Federation Conference which had been held in Newcastle. He commended the resolution adopted at the conference advocating the removal of the disabilities of women in regard to politics. He had to propose a vote of thanks to their esteemed and valued friend in the chair. It was well that Mr. Angus had been called to occupy the position of President of the Newcastle Liberal Association, because he was well fitted for that position. He was held in universal respect, and it was necessary that a strong man should follow in the position because his successor was one whose name was not only a household word but a beloved and honoured word here—Dr. Spence Watson. The last account from Teneriffe, they would be pleased to hear, was that Dr. Watson was making good progress towards recovery.

MR. THOMAS CAIRNS (Prospective Liberal candidate for Newcastle-on-Tyne) seconded the vote, which was carried with acclamation.

MR. ANGUS, having briefly replied, the proceedings terminated.

OVERFLOW MEETING AT OLYMPIA.

A crowded and enthusiastic overflow meeting was held at Olympia, where speeches were made by Mr. Charles Fenwick, M.P. (Chairman), Dr. Macnamara, M.P., and Mr. J. M. Robertson.

SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, having arrived from the Great Meeting at the Palace Theatre, made a second speech after acknowledging the cheers with which he was received. SIR HENRY said :—

Mr. Fenwick, with his usual and invariable kindness, has invoked for me your indulgence because I have been making a long speech. I should be putting forward the same plea myself, because I am really unable to make anything that could be dignified with the name of a speech to-night. But I shall at all events offer a few sincere words of thanks for the great kindness with which you have received me, and for your coming here in such large numbers. The greatest kindness you can do to me is to show your loyalty to us for the benefit of the Liberal cause. And I am sure that two such large meetings as we have had to-night in Newcastle, not only amongst the strangers who have come in connection with the National Liberal Federation, but many of the residents and population itself, show there is an abundance of zeal in the Liberal cause and of hearty sympathy with the objects we have in view. I came in when Mr. Robertson was speaking, and I am very glad that he mentioned, while I was here, that he had heard some strange persons complaining somewhat about the attitude we had taken with regard to the Aliens Bill.

THE ALIENS BILL.

Let me repeat some part of what I said on the subject at the other meeting, that no one has a greater detestation of the spirit of those who wished to exclude the foreigner from this country than I have. We owe, in the past history of the nation, immensely to the foreigners; and there is the other side of the question, which is too often overlooked—that our country, through all those ages, has made a larger use of the hospitality of other nations than any people on this earth. Our people have gone often with no money in their possession, but simply by dint of hard work and good feeling and strength of purpose they have made themselves perhaps a fortune, or at all events a livelihood—among the strangers to whom they went. They have always been well received; and why? Because for one reason they could say, ‘Don’t put any impediment in my way, because in the country from whence I came we give every man who comes to our shores a welcome.’ Once we enter upon this course of shutting our doors against the man who comes and knocks for admission, it is not this Bill or anything like it that

we shall end with, but we shall have a regular system of exclusion, or we run the risk at all events, of having a system of general exclusion such as many people would like to see here and as exists in other countries. No, sir; they say that there is no such thing as the right of asylum, that no one has the right to come here; but, whether right or not, at all events it has been the practice with us. We have benefited by it in the past, and whether we are benefited or not we wish to stand before the world and be always ready to lend a hand to those who require assistance from us. The Bill which is under discussion in the House of Commons now is a very much better Bill than the Bill of last year. A good many of the provisions in that Bill which we thought most vicious and iniquitous have been removed. The authors have learned something from our position—and now there are only one or two points in the Bill to which we need take exception to as it stands. No one wishes undesirable men to come into this country—criminals or diseased persons or others like that. But, on the other hand, I would have no man excluded on the ground of poverty. A man who comes here without a penny in his pocket may within a week be a better workman and do more to build up the prosperity of the country than the man who comes with a little money. And I would have no impediment placed in the way of the poor man who comes here to escape from tyranny, either ecclesiastical or civil. A man may find his position in a foreign country intolerable without a warrant being out for his apprehension and he may seek these shores. Why should we not exercise hospitality in his favour as we have done in the past? With these emendations the Bill will pass. I regret the necessity of any such Bill. I don't accept in any way the arguments used in its favour except in so far as criminal and diseased persons are concerned, and it is in that limited sense that we have not voted in support of it, which I could not do, and allow it to pass, because it is perfectly evident with these views which I have expressed it would not have been consistent with proper action if we had gone the length of openly and strongly opposing it.

LIBERAL IDEALS.

I have just heard an inspiring speech, a much more inspiring speech than I could give you at this or at any other time, and especially now, from Mr. Birrell, who pointed out what we are often apt to forget—that while we are a practical party dealing with plain matters of policy and anxious to avoid high flying theories of policy and distant and somewhat nebulous ideals, yet we must have those ideals. We must have ideals of some sort if we have to have a proper degree of enthusiasm and interest in political matters, and our ideals, as he says, are not in the way of exclusion and separation and distinguishing between nations, but that all nations should be gradually brought together, not the colonies only, but the whole of the civilised nations of the world, into a bond of brotherhood, that they should cease this ridiculous struggle and

competition in the art of killing each other, that they should cease expenditure for that purpose which is weighing them all down gradually. It cannot be done suddenly, but gradually. We should try to induce public opinion in other countries as well as our own to move in that direction, and if we have that as our ideal we are more likely to carry successfully the more moderate reforms which we wish to see accomplished. So far as our domestic affairs are concerned, what are the great principles we want to assert? I think the principal thing that wants assertion is this: that the interests of the general public must be made supreme over the interests of any individual, or monopoly, or class, or profession, or of any private interest. The Government which is now in power has again and again given us reason to know that their theory is exactly the reverse.

CLASS LEGISLATION.

They have taken public money, and have endowed either a sect or a class of some particular form of property. We would go exactly in the opposite direction. We would put an end to every privilege and every monopoly which is injurious to the general interests of all. We would do our best, God helping us, to give every man the chance to develop in his own way the faculties and opportunities which God may give him. You cannot abolish distinctions; you cannot make all men equal by Act of Parliament; but at least you can give some equal chance of a man using such opportunities as he has for raising him socially, intellectually, and morally amongst his fellow-men. That is our great object, and I trust that if we are fortunate enough to be called into power—and that remains with you—if we get the opportunity to say whether our ideas should be brought to bear on the condition of affairs in this country or not, then I hope these will be the principal objects to which our energy should be directed. In my exhausted condition, my voice partly gone, my collar gone—one of the most serious calamities that can befall a man—and being under other disadvantages I must ask you to excuse me making anything in the nature of a speech; but you cannot have a more sincere and hearty friend than you have in me, and you cannot have anyone more thoroughly conscious in his innermost heart that you also are friends of his. ✓

Breakfast to Liberal Secretaries and Agents.

On Saturday morning, May 20th, the Liberal Secretaries and Agents, to the number of 150, were entertained at breakfast in the Assembly Room of the Grand Hotel by Mr. Herbert Gladstone, M.P. (Chief Liberal Whip), and the President of the National Liberal Federation.

The Chairman (Mr. Birrell) read the following letter from Mr. Gladstone, regretting his absence :—

“MY DEAR BIRRELL,

“I am sorry to say that I cannot be with you on Saturday at our annual breakfast to our friends, the Liberal agents. I trust that you will express to them the hearty welcome which I should have liked to give them and my regret for my absence. At our Manchester breakfast last year I urged that our success at by-elections should not tempt us to rest on our oars in our constituencies. I am glad to think that since then our position all along the line has been strengthened. Our candidates have been doing splendid work, and we all know how much of that is due to our agents. And so it must continue until the ragged threads which hold the Government in office, but not in power, are further frayed to the breaking-point. With heartiest greetings to our friends,

“Yours very truly,

“H. J. GLADSTONE.”

Mr. BIRRELL also announced that he had received a cable from Dr. Spence Watson, who was abroad for the sake of his health, “gratefully and heartily” returning the greetings sent by the Federation at its first day’s session.

Mr. Birrell said that whenever the General Election came it would find the Liberal Party ready. The longer it was postponed the better they would be prepared. There were still some constituencies where the candidates had been a very short time before the electors. They had some constituencies even yet where candidates had not been fixed up. He did not believe it possible that the Government could rehabilitate itself within the next six or twelve months. He could not recall a single instance in political history of a Government, which had sunk to the same level in public estimation as the present Government, being able by some chance occurrence to restore its reputation. Once gone, it had gone. Its reputation was over. Any power it had had was spent. Any authority it once possessed had been taken from it. Their obligation and duty was to spend their time between now and the General Election in preparing for that election. They were there filled with hope, filled with courage, and with a certain amount of joy and anticipation about them.

Mr. NASH (Chairman of the Society of Liberal Agents) proposed a vote of thanks to the Chief Whip and the President. This was seconded by Mr. F. C. RIVERS (Eastbourne), and carried by acclamation.

OTHER MEETINGS.

In addition to the meetings reported in the preceding pages a series of business and social gatherings of the Liberal Agents of England and Wales were held on Wednesday, May 17th—"Agent's Day," as the day preceding the opening Session of the Federation Council is now called. Considerations of space prevent these gatherings from being more than merely chronicled.

The Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Society of Certificated and Associated Liberal Agents was held at the County Hotel, Neville-street, previous to which an examination for certificates of proficiency was held at the offices of the Liberal Association.

On Thursday, May 18th, meetings were held of the New Central Council of the Society of Certificated and Associated Liberal Agents and of the Board of Management of the Gladstone Benevolent Fund for Liberal Agents.

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# NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION.

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PROCEEDINGS

IN CONNECTION WITH THE

## TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION,

HELD IN LIVERPOOL,

MAY 23rd, 24th, and 25th, 1906,

WITH

*The Annual Report and the Speeches,*

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**D. LLOYD-GEORGE, M.P.**

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# CONTENTS.

|                                                                       | PAGE |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 1.—Summary of the Proceedings ... ..                                  | 4    |
| 2.—Twenty-Eighth Annual Report ... ..                                 | 9    |
| 3.—First Session of the Council ... ..                                | 45   |
| Election of President and Treasurer ... ..                            | 48   |
| Presidential Address ... ..                                           | 49   |
| Vote of Thanks to Retiring President and Treasurer ... ..             | 54   |
| Report and Statement of Accounts ... ..                               | 55   |
| The General Election and the New Government ... ..                    | 56   |
| Free Trade ... ..                                                     | 57   |
| 4.—Second Session of the Council ... ..                               | 60   |
| The Education Bill ... ..                                             | 60   |
| The First Session of the New Parliament ... ..                        | 66   |
| Vote of Thanks to Liverpool Hosts ... ..                              | 68   |
| 5.—Public Meeting in Sun Hall ... ..                                  | 69   |
| Chairman's Address... ..                                              | 69   |
| Speech by Mr. Lloyd-George ... ..                                     | 70   |
| Thanks to Mr. Lloyd-George and Confidence in the<br>Government ... .. | 83   |
| Thanks to the Chairman ... ..                                         | 84   |
| 6.—Breakfast to Liberal Secretaries and Agents ... ..                 | 85   |
| 7.—Other Meetings ... ..                                              | 89   |

# NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION.

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## PRESIDENT :

THE RIGHT HON. A. H. D. ACLAND.

## CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE :

EDWARD EVANS.

*(President of the Liverpool Liberal Federal Council.)*

## TREASURER :

ROBERT BIRD.

*(Vice-President of the Cardiff Liberal Association.)*

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE :

*(Elected at the Annual Meeting of the General Committee at Derby,  
March 16th, 1906.)*

ANGUS, WILLIAM (President of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal Association).  
BARRAN, ALFRED (Leeds Liberal Federation).  
BEELEY, T. CARTER (President of the Hyde Division [Cheshire] Liberal Association).  
BENTHAM, GEORGE JACKSON (Chairman of the Hull and District Liberal Federation).  
BUNTING, P. W. (Vice-President of the South St. Pancras Liberal Association).  
BURGESS, A. H. (Hon. Sec. of the Harborough Division [Leicestershire] Lib. Assn.).  
ELVERSTON, HAROLD (Treasurer of the Manchester Liberal Federation).  
FLETCHER, THOMAS (President of the Derby Liberal Association).  
GILBERT, J. D. (London Liberal Federation).  
JOHNSON, B. S. (President of the Bootle Division [Lancs.] Liberal Association).  
LEVESON-GOWER, GEORGE (Chairman of Executive, Home Counties Div. of the N.L.F.).  
MOIR, LEWIS (Vice-President of the Ipswich Liberal Association).  
MORRELL, J. B. (Treasurer of the York Liberal Association).  
PRIESTMAN, H. B. (President of the Bradford Liberal Association).  
RADFORD, CHARLES H. (President of the Plymouth Liberal Association).  
SLACK, JOHN BAMFORD (Vice-President of the South St. Pancras Liberal Association).  
TOWNSEND, CHARLES (President of the Bristol Liberal Federation).  
WRIGHT, FRANK (President of the Birmingham Liberal Association).

## SECRETARY :

ROBT. A. HUDSON.

## ASSISTANT SECRETARY :

FRANK BARTER.

## OFFICES :

42, PARLIAMENT STREET, LONDON, S.W.

(Telegrams ; "Liberalize," London. Telephone : 3172 Gerrard.)



PROCEEDINGS  
AT THE  
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL  
OF THE  
NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION

HELD AT THE  
HOPE HALL, LIVERPOOL,

WEDNESDAY and THURSDAY, MAY 23rd and 24th, 1906.

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FIRST SESSION.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 23RD. 2 P.M.

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**ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND TREASURER.**

Moved by MR. EDWARD EVANS (Chairman of Committee); seconded by MR. FRANK WRIGHT (Birmingham); and resolved:—

“That the Right Honourable Arthur H. D. Acland be elected President, and that Mr. Robert Bird be elected Treasurer for the ensuing year.”

**VOTE OF THANKS TO RETIRING PRESIDENT AND TREASURER.**

Moved by MR. A. E. W. Mason, M.P. (Coventry); seconded by MR. B. S. JOHNSON (President of the Bootle Division [Lancs.] Liberal Association); and resolved:—

“That this Council tenders to Mr. Birrell its warm congratulations upon his entrance to the Cabinet as President of the Board of Education. It views with very real regret his retirement from the Presidency of this Federation, records its profound sense and most grateful appreciation of the service he has rendered to the party, both as President of the National Liberal Federation and as Chairman of the Liberal Publication Department; and offers to him its earnest good wishes in the high and re-

sponsible work which falls to him in the first session of the new Parliament.

“The Council also congratulates Mr. Massie upon his election to the House of Commons, deeply regrets his resignation of the Treasurership, and tenders to him its best thanks for the many and great services which he has rendered to this organisation over a period of so many years.”

## REPORT AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS.

Moved by MR. WILLIAM ANGUS (President of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal Association); seconded by MR. J. F. L. BRUNNER, M.P. (Lancashire—Leigh Division); and resolved:—

“That the report and statement of accounts be received and adopted.”

## THE GENERAL ELECTION AND THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

Moved by MR. BAMFORD SLACK (St. Albans); seconded by DR. A. P. THOMAS (Liverpool); and resolved:—

“That this Council, at its first meeting since the General Election, records its profound satisfaction that the long reign of Toryism is ended, and that the affairs of the country are in the hands of a Liberal Government, resting on the support of the greatest Parliamentary majority since the time of the great Reform Act of 1832.

“The Council expresses its loyal and heartfelt confidence in Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and his colleagues in the Ministry, and pledges itself to use every effort to maintain and increase the strength of Liberalism in the constituencies.”

## FREE TRADE.

Moved by THE LORD BRASSEY, K.C.B.; seconded by MR. ALFRED MOND, M.P. (Chester: Treasurer of the Free Trade Union); and resolved:—

“That this Council expresses its great satisfaction at the determination of the country, as made evident at the General Election, to resist all attempts to deprive it of the incalculable advantage which has accrued to it from the adoption of Free Trade; and the Council pledges itself, whenever the need shall again arise, to repeat its resistance to Protection, whether in the form of a tax on food or of a general tariff, or disguised as Retaliation, Colonial Preference, or Tariff Reform.”

## SECOND SESSION.

THURSDAY, MAY 24TH. 10.30 A.M.

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### EDUCATION.

Moved by MR. GEORGE WHITE, M.P. (Norfolk—North-Western Division); seconded by MR. ELLIS J. GRIFFITH, M.P. (Anglesey); supported by LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY; and resolved :—

“That this Council heartily supports the Education Bill, as based upon the principles that in elementary education there shall be complete public management and control, and no religious tests for teachers, and that no part of the cost of denominational teaching shall fall upon public funds.

“The Council, confident that the constituencies approve of the measure as giving effect to principles they have already endorsed at the polls, and recognising that the Bill as it stands is framed in a spirit of generous consideration for the claims of the existing denominational schools, urges the Government to resist all attempts to whittle away principles which the country is resolved to see enforced, and on which alone can the foundation be laid for the future educational progress which the nation so urgently needs.

“Further, the Council earnestly hopes that opportunity will soon be found to apply the same principles to the important questions of Secondary Education and the Training of Teachers.”

### THE FIRST SESSION OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT.

Moved by SIR JOHN BRUNNER, Bart, M.P. (Cheshire : Northwich Division); seconded by MR. HENRY VIVIAN, M.P. (Birkenhead); supported by MR. GEORGE GREEN (Chairman of the General Council of the Scottish Liberal Association); and resolved :—

“That this Council warmly approves of the programme of legislation which, in addition to the Education Bill, is outlined in the King's Speech, containing as it does such measures as those dealing with Trade Disputes, Workmen's Compensation, Unemployment, the Equalisation of Rates in London, Merchant Shipping, the Abolition of the Property Qualification for County Justices, and the Abolition of Plural Voting.

“The Council confidently trusts the Government and the Liberal majority in the House of Commons to see that these Bills are placed upon the Statute Book this Session, and looks forward in future Sessions to measures which shall carry out the other social and political reforms to which the Liberal party stands pledged.

“The Council records its satisfaction with the action of the Government in regard to Chinese Labour and other South African problems, approves its policy as regards labour in the great administrative departments of the State, and cordially endorses the declarations made by the House of Commons with regard to the Taxation of Land Values, Land Tenure, Old Age Pensions, the Feeding of School Children, the Control of the Liquor Traffic, and the Payment of Members and of Official Election Expenses.”

### **VOTE OF THANKS TO LIVERPOOL HOSTS.**

Moved by MR. A. H. SCOTT, M.P. (Ashton-under-Lyne); seconded by MR. G. LEVESON-GOWER (National Liberal Federation—Executive Committee); and resolved :—

“That the best thanks of this Council be tendered to the President of the Liverpool Liberal Federal Council and his colleagues, and to the Officers and Members of the Reception Committee; also to Mr. A. G. Jeans, Chairman of the Liverpool Reform Club; Mr. Walter J. Bellis, Chairman of the Liverpool Junior Reform Club; and the Committees of both those Clubs, and to the Managers of the White Star and Cunard Lines, to Messrs. Lever Bros., to the Directors of the Electrical Railway, and to all others who, by the excellence of their local arrangements and by their cordial welcome and generous hospitality, have contributed so much to the pleasure of the Delegates, and to the success of the visit of the National Liberal Federation to Liverpool.”

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# PUBLIC MEETING

HELD IN THE

SUN HALL,

THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 24th, 1906.

Mr. Edward Evans, J.P. (President of the Liverpool Liberal Federal Council), in the Chair.

## CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.

### SPEECH BY

The Right Hon. D. LLOYD-GEORGE, M.P.

*(President of the Board of Trade).*

## THANKS TO MR. LLOYD-GEORGE, AND CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT.

Moved by THE RIGHT HON. A. H. D. ACLAND (President of the National Liberal Federation); seconded by THE RIGHT HON. R. R. CHERRY, K.C., M.P., Attorney-General for Ireland (Exchange Division of Liverpool); supported by DR. A. P. THOMAS; and resolved:—

“That this meeting expresses its deep regret at the absence of the Prime Minister and at the cause of that absence; while according its warmest thanks to Mr. Lloyd-George for his presence and speech to-night; it congratulates Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman upon his accession to the high office of Prime Minister and assures him and his colleagues of the loyal and heartfelt confidence of the Liberal Party; it endorses the resolutions adopted by the Council of the National Liberal Federation at its meetings in Liverpool, and pledges itself to use every effort to maintain and increase the strength of Liberalism in the constituencies.”

## THANKS TO THE CHAIRMAN.

Moved by MR. LLOYD-GEORGE; seconded by MR. GEORGE WHITELEY, M.P., Chief Liberal Whip (Pudsey Division, Yorks.); and resolved:—

“That this Meeting expresses its best thanks to the Chairman of the Liverpool Liberal Federal Council for his conduct in the Chair to-night.”

# NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION.

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## REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

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### INTRODUCTORY.

The year has been a memorable one, since it has witnessed the end of a long period of Tory rule, and the advent to office of a Liberal Government resting on the support of the largest House of Commons majority since the Reform Act of 1832.

This is a highly satisfactory and triumphant outcome of long years of preparation, but the result has been well worth waiting and working for. A peaceful revolution has been effected in the balance of parties, and in the *personnel* of the House of Commons. The Liberal party heartily welcomes the great increase in the number of Labour members. The problems of practical politics can only be successfully dealt with by the friendly and sympathetic co-operation of all sections of the forces of Progress.

Signs of a new spirit, alike in legislation and administration, are everywhere evident. There is a great deal to be done before the house can be set in order, but the work is being attacked with great industry and enthusiasm. In that work the Liberal Ministry and members of the House of Commons will have the hearty support and co-operation of this Federation and of the Liberal party in the constituencies.

## TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING.

The Twenty-seventh Annual Meeting of the Federation was held at Newcastle-on-Tyne on May 18th and 19th, 1905.

### FIRST SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

THURSDAY, MAY 18TH, 1905.

The First Session of the Council was held in the Town Hall on the afternoon of Thursday, May 18th, Mr. Augustine Birrell presiding.

The adoption of the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts was moved by the President, seconded by Sir James Joicey, Bt., M.P. (Durham—Chester-le-Street), and carried unanimously.

It was moved by Mr. William Angus (President of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal Association), seconded by Mr. Thomas Cairns (Prospective Liberal Candidate for Newcastle-on-Tyne), and unanimously resolved :—

“That Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C., be re-elected President, and that Mr. John Massie be re-elected Treasurer for the ensuing year.”

It was moved by Mr. Thomas Burt, M.P. (Morpeth), seconded by Mr. Ellis J. Griffith, M.P. (Anglesey), supported by Mr. J. A. Pease, M.P. (Essex—Saffron Walden Division), and unanimously resolved :—

“That this Council records its hearty and unabated confidence in Lord Spencer and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and their colleagues in the two Houses of Parliament, and calls upon Ministers to submit themselves to the judgment of the constituencies instead of clinging to office in face of the Country's clearly expressed condemnation of their record and policy.”

It was moved by Sir Christopher Furness, M.P. (Hartlepool), seconded by Mr. Reginald McKenna, M.P. (Monmouthshire—Northern Division), and unanimously resolved :—

“That this Council, convinced of the benefits which have accrued to this country through its adoption of Free Trade as the national policy, affirms its unwavering determination to resist all proposals to depart from that policy, since, whether presented under the guise of Tariff Reform, Retaliation, Preferential Trade, or Protection, they must inevitably raise the price of food and raw materials, diminish trade, involve us in a war of tariffs, endanger our relations with the Colonies, and threaten the stability of the Empire.”

It was moved by Mr. Charles Fenwick, M.P. (Northumberland—Wansbeck Division), seconded by Mr. W. H. Lever (Chairman of the Wirral [Cheshire] Liberal Association), and unanimously resolved :—

“That this Council is strongly of opinion that immediate steps should be taken to restore to workmen the right of effective combination of which they have recently been deprived by decisions of the Courts.

“This Council is also of opinion that the State should create permanent machinery applicable to the whole country for investigating and alleviating the lack of employment caused from time to time by exceptional trade depression.”

## SECOND SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

FRIDAY, MAY 19TH.

The Second Session of the Council was held in the Town Hall, on the morning of Friday, May 19th, Mr. Augustine Birrell (President of the Federation) in the chair.

It was moved by the Right Hon. R. B. Haldane, K.C., M.P. (Haddingtonshire), seconded by Mr. T. P. Whittaker, M.P. (Yorkshire—Spenn Valley Division), and unanimously resolved :—

“That this Council strongly condemns the Licensing Act of 1904 as placing new and serious obstacles in the way of Temperance Reform, and declares that the measure should at the first practicable moment be amended, so as to secure (amongst other things) a time limit to the compensation clause, and the restoration of the right to refuse Licences and impose conditions to a local Licensing authority invested with enlarged powers.”

It was moved by Mr. John Massie (Treasurer of the National Liberal Federation), seconded by Mr. Francis D. Acland (Prospective Liberal Candidate for the Richmond Division of Yorkshire), and unanimously resolved :—

“That this Council, re-affirming its previous declarations on the Education question, declares that no settlement can be permanent or satisfactory which does not secure a national system of Education based on effective popular control and management, and freed from religious tests and sectarian influences.



It was moved by Mr. George Lambert, M.P. (Devonshire—South Molton Division), seconded by Mr. Herbert Samuel, M.P. (Yorkshire—Cleveland Division), and unanimously resolved :—

“That this Council regards a right settlement of the questions of ownership, transfer, tenure, and taxation of land as the indispensable condition of any satisfactory scheme of social reform, and in particular as essential to the proper treatment of the growing evils of overcrowding in towns and depopulation of the rural districts, and, while not seeking to enumerate all the reforms which may eventually be proved necessary, this Council considers that the following proposals should receive the immediate attention of Parliament :—

“(1) That a tax be levied on Land Values so as to give the community a share in the monopoly value of land, bring building sites into the market, relieve rates, and lighten the burdens on industry.

“(2) That the Agricultural Holdings Acts of 1883 and 1900 be so amended as to secure to the tenant-farmer a statutory right to carry out all improvements suitable to his holding and necessary for its proper working, and to obtain compensation for capricious disturbance, and that disputed questions relating to improvements and compensation for improvements or for disturbance be referred to judicial arbitrators.

“(3) That larger and freer powers be given to local authorities and under certain conditions to societies and individuals, to acquire or hire land for letting in Small Holdings and for the provision of better housing accommodation for the working classes.”

It was moved by Dr. T. J. Macnamara, M.P. (Camberwell—North), seconded by Mr. John M. Robertson (Prospective Liberal Candidate for the Tyneside Division of Northumberland), and unanimously resolved :—

“That this Council re-affirms its conviction that in order to make Parliament really representative—

“(1) The House of Commons must be elected on a broadened and simplified Franchise, with no elector voting more than once ;

“(2) The conditions of Election to, and Membership of, the House of Commons must be so altered as not in effect to exclude from Parliament the less wealthy classes of the community ; and

“(3) The House of Lords must be deprived of its power to mutilate or reject legislative measures which have passed through all their stages in the representative Chamber.”

It was moved by Mr. Leif Jones, M.P. (Westmorland—Appleby Division), seconded by Mr. P. W. Bunting (Vice-President of the South St. Pancras Liberal Association), and by an overwhelming majority resolved :—

“That in the opinion of this Council the disabilities at present attaching to women by reason of sex, in the matters of the Parliamentary suffrage and of election to local bodies, should be removed.”

It was moved by Mr. Edward Evans (Chairman of Committee, National Liberal Federation), seconded by the Right Hon. the Earl of Aberdeen, G.C.M.G., and by acclamation resolved :—

“That the best thanks of this Council be tendered to the President of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal Association and his colleagues, and to the Officers and Members of the Reception Committee for their excellent arrangements in connection with the visit of the Federation to Newcastle, also to Mr. Thomas Cairns and Mrs. Cairns, and to the right Worshipful the Mayor (Mr. Alderman J. Baxter Ellis) and the Mayoress, and the officers and Committee of the Liberal Club for their generous hospitality.”

On the same evening a great Public Meeting was held in the Palace Theatre. The capacious building was filled with a most representative gathering, including the majority of delegates who had attended the two Sessions of the Federal Council.

Mr. William Angus, J.P. (President of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal and Radical Association), occupied the chair.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who received a most enthusiastic welcome, addressed the meeting, and the following resolution, which was moved by Mr. Augustine Birrell, K.C. (President of the National Liberal Federation), and seconded by Mr. W. S. Robson, K.C., M.P., was unanimously passed :—

“That this meeting accords its warmest thanks to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman for his presence and speech to-night, assures him and his colleagues of the loyal confidence of the Liberal Party, endorses the resolutions adopted by the Council of the National Liberal Federation at its meetings in Newcastle-on-Tyne, and pledges itself to help in securing the triumph of Liberal principles by the return of the Liberal Party to power whenever the present Government has the courage to submit itself to the judgment of the constituencies.”

A hearty vote of thanks to the Chairman, moved by the Earl of Aberdeen and seconded by Mr. Thomas Cairns (Prospective Liberal

Candidate for Newcastle-on-Tyne), brought the great meeting to a close.

In connection with the visit of the Federation to Newcastle, a Reception was given in the Assembly Room, on May 18th, by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Cairns, on behalf of the Northern Liberal Federation and the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal Association.

## THE AUTUMN CAMPAIGN.

At the meeting of the Executive Committee on October 4th, 1905, the officers were directed to issue (on October 14th) the following circular to the affiliated Associations and the Press:—

### THE POLITICAL SITUATION.

Mid-October having been reached without any hint from the Government that they are prepared this year to meet the universal demand for a dissolution of Parliament, we might safely assume, with any Prime Minister but Mr. Balfour, that there will be no General Election on the present Register. Since the decision, however, rests where it does, it would be unwise to regard as certain what seems from all the indications to be probable. The Prime Minister will choose the time for going to the country which he thinks will suit him best as promising least disaster to his party. We need not attach too much importance to his Redistribution proposals. Probably few people imagine that the Government will be able to carry a measure on this subject, since any proposals which only tinker at Redistribution, and do not touch franchise and registration reform, are certain to meet with the resistance of the whole Liberal party.

Though disappointment at the long-deferred General Election is natural enough, yet every additional day only helps to consolidate the feeling against the Government and to pile up the Liberal majority in the next Parliament. In their anxiety to escape being chastised with whips, Tory Ministers are making sure of the scorpions. The duty of Liberals is clearly to wait for the day of reckoning in the certain assurance that when it comes it will bring with it victory worth both waiting and working for.

At the same time, it would be folly to leave anything to chance, and heavy would be the responsibility of any Liberal who did anything to diminish or qualify the victory. On the Fiscal Question, for instance, the forces arrayed against Free Trade are powerful, however quiescent they may appear to be at the present moment. The legitimate pride which we all feel in the Empire will once again be basely used for electioneering purposes. The combative instincts of a combative race will be appealed to as against the dumping depredations of the foreigner of Tariff Reform fiction. The promises of higher wages and guaranteed employment—"two jobs for one man" in Mr. Chamberlain's phrase—

will be lavish and uncompromising. All these influences can only be resisted by our continuing to prove, as we have been able to do, that the greatest good of the greatest number is bound up in the maintenance of our Free Trade system, as shown both by our own experience of sixty years and by present comparisons with other nations.

Free Trade versus Protection will, however, not be the only issue at the election. Tory Ministers by their acts during the last ten years have provided plenty of difficult tasks which the nation will desire to see entrusted to a Liberal Government. National expenditure has been extravagantly increased, and is now far beyond national necessities; in the interests of the taxpayer and of trade there must be a return to sound and economical finance. The Education and Licensing Acts must be amended, in both cases, so that the public good may be asserted as against the vested interests of favoured classes. The Army must, at less cost, be made more efficient, *i.e.*, better able to do all that can be required of it in any sane and reasonable scheme of Imperial Defence. The deliberate discouragement of our Volunteer Forces amounts to a national danger. Other issues will be the question of Chinese Labour, the law of trade combination, and those far-reaching reforms which affect the land, whether urban or rural.

What the country will expect from the Liberal party is a new spirit alike in legislation and administration. The people are tired of a spurious statesmanship which merely seeks to stave off dissolution by tricks involving the degradation of our Parliamentary and representative institutions. The time is ripe for the application of Liberal principles to problems which have been either wholly ignored or only dealt with in the interest of particular sections to the detriment of the rights of the community as a whole.

We are glad to be able to report good progress in the matter of Liberal organisation. Our National Liberal Campaign Fund, started two years ago, has now reached a sum of £40,000, and we hope that the £50,000 originally aimed at may be obtained. The money we have thus been enabled to expend has already proved of incalculable service to the cause. The Liberal Publication Department is maintaining and even bettering its own excellent record, and is more fully equipped than ever to cope with the demands which a General Election involves. The work of registration throughout the country generally, has been thoroughly and carefully attended to. One result of improved organisation is that very few constituencies are to-day without a Liberal candidate, and whenever the election comes fewer Tory seats will go uncontested than has been the case at any previous election.

Men of every shade and no shade of politics unite with us in anticipating a great Liberal victory. But without hard work and loyal party union even such universal anticipations may be falsified. Let it not be said that at a time at once so hopeful and so pregnant with consequences, any single Association belonging to our Federation failed to earn for itself a full share of the triumphs of victory.

## THE NATIONAL LIBERAL CAMPAIGN FUND.

It is just three years since the Committee, at Scarborough, appealed to the members of the Federation, and to the party at large, for a fund wherewith to bring the constituencies of England and Wales into a condition of preparedness for the next General Election. As chance would have it, that same day in May, 1903, was selected by Mr. Chamberlain for the opening of his tariff campaign.

The Federation can look back to-day on the events of the past three years with at least as much composure as can Mr. Chamberlain. Precisely what that gentleman had in mind when he raised the cry of Protection no one (except himself) can say. That he disunited the Unionist party, and wrecked the Tory Government, is now a matter of history. The share which this Federation was able to take in the battle for Free Trade and Liberalism depended largely on the response to our Scarborough appeal for money. We asked for £50,000, and we received no less than £46,000. This large sum of money was contributed by 1,952 persons, in sums which ranged from 2,500 guineas to 1s. The Committee found double ground of satisfaction in the aggregate reached and in the wide field from which the money was drawn. The fund was employed:—

- (i) In bringing the Party machinery into the highest state of efficiency for the prospective Appeal to the Country.
- (ii) In providing for a universal and systematic distribution of literature and in organising an adequate force of Speakers, Lecturers, and Liberal Missionaries.
- (iii) In rendering such financial aid as was possible to Constituencies which sought to run poor men as their Candidates, so that these Constituencies should not be handicapped by lack of means to pay for essential and legitimate work.

The Committee are satisfied that the three years' campaign which they were thus enabled, by the generosity of their supporters, to wage had a real and far-reaching influence. The party went into battle better arrayed for conflict than it ever had been before. Every constituency (except Oxford University, and that represented by the Speaker) was contested by a candidate pledged to maintain

Free Trade, and this readiness for the fight and universality of the conflict is largely due to the assistance which the National Liberal Federation was in a position to render. Our thanks are due, and are hereby tendered, to all who contributed to the Campaign Fund. They bore their share in a great and historic fight, not merely by the individual work which they performed in their own localities, but by helping to provide the party nationally with the essential sinews of war.

The Committee will shortly make yet another appeal to the friends and supporters of this Federation. From time to time, as the need has arisen, contributors have come forward, and provided special funds for special purposes. But the Federation lacks a permanent subscription list, adequate to the barest annual requirements of normal times. A yearly income of £5,000 should be assured if the organisation is to be maintained in a condition of proper efficiency. It is true that we have won a memorable victory, but we cannot afford to sit down and fold our hands. If we are to keep what we have gained, our efforts must not be relaxed, nor must the efficiency of our machinery be impaired. It is safe to predict that the next few years will witness a great re-consolidation of the forces against us. We venture, then, to ask, in advance, that when our appeal is made, it may meet with the sympathetic and generous consideration of all those to whom it is addressed.

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## THE LIBERAL GOVERNMENT.

The last Session of the Tory Government ended in signal discomfiture for Tory Ministers. The Aliens Act and the Unemployed Act were almost the only measures placed upon the Statute Book. The Redistribution resolutions, after being tabled, were hurriedly withdrawn a few days later when it was discovered that the House of Commons would be allowed to have some real chance of discussing them. None the less, the Session ended with Ministers protesting that they intended to meet Parliament in 1906, when Redistribution would seriously be tackled as a preliminary to dissolution, which by that time the Septennial Act would make inevitable. As it turned out, however, the sequence of events proved very different.

The Unionist party found themselves in as great difficulty with the fiscal question on the platform as in Parliament. Mr. Balfour appealed for unity; Mr. Chamberlain's reply was once again to put forward his own programme. It would, perhaps, be asserting too much to say that this disunion led to Mr. Balfour's decision to resign, but whatever the reason may have been, Mr. Balfour resigned on December 4th. Without a doubt the constitutional procedure would have been to wait until the new year, and then dissolve; but he was resolutely bent on the General Election taking place with a Liberal Government in office. His calculation was that the nation would take fright when they saw who the Liberal Ministers were, and that in any case the Unionist defeat would be mitigated if Unionist Ministers went to the country as an Opposition. The King sent for Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who at once kissed hands as Prime Minister, and undertook to form a Government—an undertaking redeemed without loss of time, to the great satisfaction of the Liberal party, and indeed of the country as a whole. There was a general welcome to the new Ministry, both on its own merits and because it got rid of Mr. Balfour and his colleagues, who had long outstayed whatever welcome they ever had.

The Committee desire to put on record the heartfelt satisfaction with which the Liberal party hailed the Prime Ministership of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Called to lead the party at a time of difficulty, he had through seven years stuck to the ship, with indomitable courage and stoutheartedness. No other leader could have kept the party so well together, and the Prime Minister's popularity in the present House of Commons is the best tribute to his fidelity to Liberal principles and to his sterling qualities of character. Not less satisfied is the party with the Ministers associated with Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in the Government, one of the strongest and most representative Liberal Administrations which has ever held office.

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### THE GENERAL ELECTION.

Every Liberal went into the General Election with the certain and confident hope of victory, but the completeness of the victory actually achieved exceeded the expectation of even the most optimistic of

Liberals. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and his colleagues were not only given a majority, but a majority in votes and seats for which there is no parallel since the great Reform Act of 1832. It was a victory which can best be appreciated by a sober recital of its statistics; it needs no rhetoric to enhance or emphasise its significance.

At the time of the Dissolution the Liberal Opposition in the House of Commons numbered 216; after the General Election the strength of the Tory Opposition was only 157. The story of what happened is summed up in the following comparative table:—

## 1900, 1905, AND 1906.

| Constituencies.     | No. of<br>Seats. | General Election,<br>1900. |     |     |    | Dissolution,<br>1905. |     |     |    | General Election,<br>1906. |     |              |    |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------------------|-----|-----|----|-----------------------|-----|-----|----|----------------------------|-----|--------------|----|
|                     |                  | C.                         | LU. | L.  | N. | C.                    | LU. | L.  | N. | C.                         | LU. | L. &<br>Lab. | N. |
| <b>ENGLAND :—</b>   |                  |                            |     |     |    |                       |     |     |    |                            |     |              |    |
| London ... ..       | 61               | 52                         | 1   | 8   | —  | 49                    | 2   | 10  | —  | 19                         | —   | 42           | —  |
| Boroughs ... ..     | 165              | 105                        | 20  | 39  | 1  | 99                    | 19  | 46  | 1  | 33                         | 10  | 121          | 1  |
| Counties ... ..     | 234              | 132                        | 24  | 78  | —  | 121                   | 21  | 92  | —  | 53                         | 7   | 174          | —  |
| Universities ... .. | 5                | 3                          | 2   | —   | —  | 3                     | 1   | 1   | —  | 2                          | 3   | —            | —  |
| <b>WALES :—</b>     |                  |                            |     |     |    |                       |     |     |    |                            |     |              |    |
| Boroughs ... ..     | 11               | 3                          | —   | 8   | —  | 3                     | 1   | 7   | —  | —                          | —   | 11           | —  |
| Counties ... ..     | 19               | 1                          | —   | 18  | —  | 1                     | —   | 18  | —  | —                          | —   | 19           | —  |
| <b>SCOTLAND :—</b>  |                  |                            |     |     |    |                       |     |     |    |                            |     |              |    |
| Burghs ... ..       | 31               | 8                          | 8   | 15  | —  | 7                     | 6   | 18  | —  | 1                          | 5   | 25           | —  |
| Counties ... ..     | 39               | 11                         | 9   | 19  | —  | 9                     | 8   | 22  | —  | 3                          | 1   | 35           | —  |
| Universities ... .. | 2                | 2                          | —   | —   | —  | 2                     | —   | —   | —  | 2                          | —   | —            | —  |
| <b>IRELAND :—</b>   |                  |                            |     |     |    |                       |     |     |    |                            |     |              |    |
| Boroughs ... ..     | 16               | 5                          | 1   | —   | 10 | 4                     | 1   | —   | 11 | 4                          | —   | —            | 12 |
| Counties ... ..     | 85               | 11                         | 2   | 1   | 71 | 10                    | 3   | 2   | 70 | 11                         | 1   | 3            | 70 |
| Universities ... .. | 2                | 1                          | 1   | —   | —  | 2                     | —   | —   | —  | 2                          | —   | —            | —  |
| <hr/>               |                  |                            |     |     |    |                       |     |     |    |                            |     |              |    |
| Totals ... ..       | 670              | 334                        | 68  | 186 | 82 | 310                   | 62  | 216 | 82 | 130                        | 27  | 430          | 83 |
|                     |                  | 402                        |     | 268 |    | 372                   |     | 298 |    | 157                        |     | 513          |    |
| Majorities ... ..   |                  | U. 134.                    |     |     |    | U. 74.                |     |     |    | L. 356.                    |     |              |    |

Of the 430 Liberal and Labour members 29 were elected under the auspices of the Labour Representation Committee. The Liberal majority over Unionist, Nationalist, and L.R.C. members is thus no less than 132.

The gains in seats were made up as follows:—



## LIBERAL AND LABOUR.

|                 | <i>Gains.</i> | <i>Losses.</i> | <i>Net Gains.</i> |
|-----------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| England ... ..  | 197           | 9              | 188               |
| Wales ... ..    | 5             | 0              | 5                 |
| Scotland ... .. | 24            | 4              | 20                |
| Ireland ... ..  | 1             | 0              | 1                 |

*Net Liberal and Labour Gain* ... .. 214

In Ireland there was also a net Nationalist gain of one seat.

Wales has the proud distinction of not returning a single Unionist, whilst English counties now wholly represented by Liberals are Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cornwall, Huntingdonshire, Leicestershire, Monmouthshire, Northamptonshire, Northumberland, Westmoreland, and Wiltshire. The only wholly Unionist county is Rutland, with its one seat. The change wrought in London, the Home Counties, and Lancashire—formerly three strongholds of Unionism—are as follows:—

|                      | <i>At Dissolution.</i> |    | <i>At General Election.</i> |    |
|----------------------|------------------------|----|-----------------------------|----|
|                      | L.                     | U. | L.                          | U. |
| London... ..         | 10                     | 51 | 42                          | 19 |
| Home Counties ... .. | 9                      | 64 | 39                          | 34 |
| Lancashire ... ..    | 16                     | 41 | 42                          | 15 |

Of the 430 Liberal and Labour members only 173 sat in the last Parliament, whilst 231 are new to the House of Commons.

One of the most remarkable features of the General Election was the fate of the ten members of Mr. Balfour's Cabinet who sought re-election. Of these, seven failed to secure re-election at the hands of their old constituents—Mr. Balfour himself, Mr. Gerald Balfour, Mr. Brodrick, Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes, Mr. Long, Mr. Lyttelton, and Lord Stanley. Mr. Long was subsequently returned for an Irish constituency, and Mr. Balfour is now the junior Member for the City of London. Outside the Cabinet six Unionist Ministers were defeated. On political, not personal, grounds it is thoroughly salutary that ex-Ministers should have reaped the whirlwind, at the sowing of which they laboured so industriously.

When we come to consider the result in votes cast the figures are no less remarkable. In the following statistics allowance has been carefully made for the uncontested seats—very few in Great Britain. The word Liberal is used to cover Liberal and Labour. Votes cast for Labour candidates are treated as Liberal, since they were cast for Free Trade

and against the late Government. Votes for all Unionist candidates, including Free-traders (*e.g.*, Lord Hugh Cecil) and Tariff Reformers (*e.g.*, Mr. I. H. Benn), are counted as Unionists, except that the votes given for Mr. Arthur Elliot at Durham are treated as Liberal. In two-member constituencies the votes cast for all the candidates on either side are added together and divided by two. The results, treated in this way, give the following :—

## ENGLAND—

|                          |     |     | Liberal and Labour. | Unionist. | Majority. |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
| London...                | ... | ... | 278,299             | 245,723   | L 32,576  |
| Boroughs                 | ... | ... | 809,818             | 634,637   | L 175,181 |
| Counties                 | ... | ... | 1,418,212           | 1,195,558 | L 222,654 |
| <hr/>                    |     |     |                     |           |           |
| Total ENGLAND            | ... | ... | 2,506,329           | 2,075,918 | L 430,411 |
| WALES                    | ... | ... | 171,315             | 96,912    | L 74,403  |
| SCOTLAND                 | ... | ... | 366,702             | 235,098   | L 131,604 |
| <hr/>                    |     |     |                     |           |           |
| Total GREAT BRITAIN      | ... | ... | 3,044,346           | 2,407,928 | L 636,418 |
| IRELAND                  | ... | ... | 350,000             | 150,000   | L 200,000 |
| <hr/>                    |     |     |                     |           |           |
| Total for UNITED KINGDOM |     |     | 3,394,346           | 2,557,928 | L 836,418 |

Ireland is almost a constant factor, and taking, therefore, the figures for Great Britain, we have the following comparison for the three last General Elections :—

## VOTE MAJORITIES.

## ENGLAND—

|                        |     |         | 1885.     |     |     | 1900.     |     |     | 1906.     |
|------------------------|-----|---------|-----------|-----|-----|-----------|-----|-----|-----------|
| London                 | ... | ...     | U 82,945  | ... | ... | U 96,731  | ... | ... | L 32,576  |
| Boroughs               | ... | ...     | U 79,303  | ... | ... | U 110,301 | ... | ... | L 175,181 |
| Counties               | ... | ...     | U 189,355 | ... | ... | U 157,541 | ... | ... | L 222,654 |
| <hr/>                  |     |         |           |     |     |           |     |     |           |
| Total ENGLAND          | ... | ...     | U 351,603 | ... | ... | U 364,573 | ... | ... | L 430,411 |
| WALES                  | ... | ...     | L 30,355  | ... | ... | L 45,570  | ... | ... | L 74,403  |
| SCOTLAND               | ... | ...     | L 10,616  | ... | ... | U 3,971   | ... | ... | L 131,604 |
| <hr/>                  |     |         |           |     |     |           |     |     |           |
| Total GREAT BRITAIN... | U   | 310,632 | ...       | ... | U   | 322,974   | ... | ... | L 636,418 |
| Majority in Seats...   | U   | 213     | ...       | ... | U   | 195       | ... | ... | L 289     |

As is nearly always the case when there is a great majority, the majority in seats is in excess of what the majority of votes would work out at proportionately. But it will be noticed that the Liberal majority is not nearly so much in excess as were the Unionist majorities of 1895 and 1900. The Liberal majority in votes is now twice what

the Unionist was, but in seats only about half as much again. Our opponents have nothing to complain of in this respect, though they make somewhat pathetic efforts to suggest that they have.

It need only be added that every seat in Great Britain (except Oxford University) had a Free Trade candidate, the only two Unionists who were returned unopposed (Mr. Lambton, for South-East Durham, and Mr. Austin Taylor, for Liverpool, East Toxteth) being both Free-traders, whilst of these two, one—Mr. Taylor—has since crossed the floor of the House. This takes no account of the unopposed election for Mid-Cumberland of Mr. J. W. Lowther, the Speaker.

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### THE STAFF OF THE FEDERATION.

No review of the past year would be complete without some tribute by the Committee to the manner in which they are served by the permanent staff at Parliament-street.

Your Committee, and indeed the whole party, are immeasurably indebted to Mr. Hudson for the manner in which he discharges his difficult and responsible duties. He enters this month on the 25th year of his service with the National Liberal Federation. In that period a long succession of Executive Committees have come to know him and appreciate his personal worth and devoted labours. Since 1882 he has served under three Liberal Prime Ministers, has worked with five Liberal Chief Whips, has gone through the ordeal of six General Elections, and throughout has made for himself countless friends and no enemies. No small share of the credit of the great triumph of the General Election is due to the skilful way in which Mr. Hudson has directed the working of our Federation. Your Committee wish thus publicly to put on record their gratitude for his long and faithful services, and their hope that for many years to come he will continue to fill the chief executive office in the national organisation of our party.

To Mr. Barter, the Assistant-Secretary of the Federation, the Committee also express their great indebtedness. The zeal and ability which he brings to the discharge of his duties are beyond all praise, and he has long since come to be the valued friend of all who seek his assistance and advice.

The whole staff of our office have always worked with splendid

devotion, and never more than in the past year and during the heavy stress of the General Election.

The Committee received in March, with great regret, the news of the death of their chief clerk, Mr. H. Law. He had been in the office of the Federation for 15 years, and there will be many at our Annual Meetings this month who will miss his face and share our sorrow at his untimely death.

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## THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION.

Immediately after the General Election the following letter was received from the Prime Minister, in response to a congratulatory resolution passed by the Executive Committee, and communicated to him by the Secretary :—

29, Belgrave-square, February 10th, 1906.

MY DEAR HUDSON,—I have received with the greatest pleasure your letter of the 8th instant, informing me of a resolution passed by the Executive Committee of the National Liberal Federation.

Pray convey to the members of the Committee my warmest thanks for their message of congratulation and confidence. It is at once a high reward for any service I may have been able to render to the Party, and an encouragement and incentive to the future. I earnestly trust that your hopes will not be disappointed, and I know that my colleagues and I can count upon your vigorous co-operation.

My main dependence rests upon the great body of Liberals throughout the country, whose opinion your great organisation so fully and worthily represents. I know to how large an extent the triumphant successes of the recent General Election are due to the skill, energy, and loyalty of those who direct the Federation, and I take this opportunity of expressing to you my sense of the obligation we are all under to you for your well-sustained labours.—Believe me, yours very sincerely,

(Signed) H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

It is needless to say that the receipt of this letter was regarded as a high compliment by the committee, who now place it on the records of our organisation.

In this connection it may be noted that the change of Government has resulted in Mr. Whiteley succeeding Mr. Gladstone as Chief Liberal Whip. Mr. Gladstone had many dealings with the Federation, and the Committee warmly appreciate the friendly spirit of cordial co-operation in which he always acted in matters of party machinery and organisation. They desire to extend a hearty

welcome to his successor, with whom they feel sure their relations will be equally friendly and useful to the party.

## RETIREMENT OF MR. BIRRELL FROM THE PRESIDENCY AND OF MR. MASSIE FROM THE TREASURERSHIP.

A General Election which altered so completely the complexion of the country worked startling changes also in the *personnel* of those who direct the operations of this Federation.

Twelve members of our Executive Committee offered themselves as Parliamentary candidates at the dissolution, and they all secured election. It is not unfitting that space should be found in this report for a record in which these twelve candidates, as well as the Federation itself, may legitimately take some pride. The following table sets out the facts:—

### MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE—PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES AT GENERAL ELECTION, 1906.

| Name.                     | Constituency. | Result.                 | Maj. | Previous result. |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|------|------------------|
| Rt. Hon. A. Birrell, K.C. | Bristol,      | Birrell L 6953          |      | 1900.            |
|                           | North         | Foote C 4011-2942       | U    | maj. 754         |
| J. Massie ...             | Wiltshire,    | Massie L 7294           |      | 1900.            |
|                           | Cricklade     | Ward C 5716-1578        | L    | maj. 834         |
| F. D. Acland ...          | Yorkshire,    | Acland L 4468           |      | 1900.            |
|                           | Richmond      | Ronaldshay C 4360-108   | U    | maj. 1456        |
| W. Ryland D. Adkins...    | Lancs.,       | Adkins L 7018           |      | 1900.            |
|                           | Middleton     | Potter C 5485-1533      | C    | maj. 136         |
| J. F. L. Brunner ...      | Lancs.,       | Brunner L 7175          |      | 1900.            |
|                           | Leigh         | McMasters C 5169-2006   | L    | maj. 120         |
| W. Howell Davies ...      | Bristol,      | Davies L 7964           |      | 1900.            |
|                           | South         | Long C 5272-2692        | C    | maj. 611         |
| W. H. Dickinson ...       | St. Pancras,  | Dickinson L 4094        |      | 1900.            |
|                           | North         | Moon C 2643-1451        | C    | maj. 711         |
| Hugh Fullerton ...        | Cumberland,   | Fullerton L 4067        |      | 1900.            |
|                           | Egremont      | Lumb C 3255-812         | C    | maj. 540         |
| Percy Illingworth ...     | Yorkshire,    | Illingworth L Unop.     |      | 1900.            |
|                           | Shipley       |                         | U    | maj. 61          |
| R. C. Lehmann...          | Leicester,    | Lehmann L 8380          |      | By-el. 1904.     |
|                           | Harboro'      | Dixon C 6382-1998       | L    | maj. 1733        |
| J. A. Murray Macdonald    | Falkirk       | Macdonald L 5158        |      |                  |
|                           | Burghs        | Keith C 3176            |      | 1500.            |
|                           |               | Gilmour, Lab. 1763-1982 | U    | maj. 200         |
| Harry Nuttall ...         | Lancashire,   | Nuttall L 11,131        |      | By-el. 1901.     |
|                           | Stretford     | Cripps C 8307-2824      | C    | maj. 1297        |

Mr. Birrell's return to Parliament had been preceded by his entrance to the new Liberal Cabinet as President of the Board of Education. We have, at one and the same time, to congratulate him on the high office he has attained, and to sympathise with the members of this Federation in losing him as their President.

For four years, as the head of our organisation, he has rendered a service to Liberalism which cannot easily in words be estimated. Ungrudging of time and labour, wise in counsel, ready alike with voice and pen, his presidency shed distinction on our Federation, and contributed in no small degree to the triumph at the polls. To our retiring president we tender our grateful thanks for all he has done for this Federation in the past four years, and to the Minister of Education we offer our congratulations on his appointment to Cabinet office, and our warmest good wishes in the great and difficult task to which he has been called.

Election to Parliament occasions the retirement of our Treasurer also. We are under heavy obligation to Mr. Massie for his long and faithful service to the Federation. A member of our Executive Committee for twelve years, chairman of the Finance Committee for a time, and treasurer of the Federation since 1903, he has given himself to our work with rare zeal and persistence. The National Liberal Campaign Fund (of which detailed mention is made elsewhere in this report) serves in some wise as a monument to his labours. £46,000 is a sum not easily raised in these days of universal begging. That we reached this fine figure is due very largely to Mr. Massie, and if we reflect on the work which the fund enabled us to do, and on the results which it helped to achieve, we speak for the Federation and for the whole Liberal party when we express to the retiring treasurer our gratitude for his past services, and our most cordial wishes for the Parliamentary career on which he has entered.

It will be conceded that the Committee were faced with no ordinary difficulty in finding fit successors to Mr. Birrell and Mr. Massie. They claim, however, to have faced the difficulty and to have overcome it. For the office of president, the Committee nominate the Right Hon. Arthur H. D. Acland, and for the treasurership they submit the name of Mr. Robert Bird.

Mr. Acland is too well-known to the Liberal party to need any introduction. His withdrawal from Parliament in 1899 was a national loss. The fact that his health now allows him to add the duties of president of this Federation to his work of local government in the West Riding will be a gratification to everyone. And it is peculiarly fitting that, in a year when education bulks so large in the public mind, the last Liberal Minister of Education should be willing to preside over this Federation when our presidential chair is vacated by Mr. Birrell's appointment to the office which Mr. Acland himself once held with such great distinction. The Executive Committee have felt it right to give Mr. Acland assurances that they will make the smallest demands on his time and strength consistent with the important duties they have persuaded him to undertake.

For the post of treasurer, the Committee nominate the present chairman of our Finance Committee, Mr. Robert Bird, of Cardiff. In point of service on the Executive Committee, Mr. Bird is one of our senior members, and the Committee bespeak for him the same consideration, and the same generous response to his appeals, as have been accorded to his predecessor in office. Political organisation cannot be maintained without expense, and the defence of the position gained in January is not less important, and will not be less onerous than was the work of attack. Organisation, registration, and political education must go on. These things cost money, and the Committee trust that when our new treasurer asks for the means to enable the Federation to continue its work, he will not ask in vain.

A word may be permitted as to the other ten members of our Executive whom we have lost by reason of their election to Parliament. For varying lengths of time, they have one and all served this organisation faithfully and well. Our loss is the gain of the House of Commons, and to these ten gentlemen we offer our thanks for their past support of the Federation, and our warm good wishes for their respective futures in Parliament.

## THE LIBERAL PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT.

The greatest possible service was rendered to the party at the General Election by the Liberal Publication Department, and it may safely be said that on no previous occasion was the party literature of all kinds so effective and attractive. Perhaps the best testimonial to its effectiveness has been the bitter attacks to which the Department has since been subjected by opponents seeking to explain an unparalleled defeat. In point of fact the literature of the Department was distinguished by accuracy, fairness, and moderation, and it is hardly uncharitable to infer that Unionists are in reality chagrined at the superiority of the Liberal intelligence department.

The volume of business transacted by the Department at the Election was much greater than on any previous occasion. Over twenty-six millions of pamphlets, leaflets, and books were sold, whilst in addition the Department acted as publishers for the Free Trade Union. In all, over a hundred tons of literature was packed and despatched from 42, Parliament-street in less than two months. It is hardly possible to review in full detail the different activities of the Department, but a rapid glance over the ground covered may be interesting. The domestic record of the late Government was available for speakers in the Handbook, *Ten Years of Tory Government*. Over a hundred and twenty different kinds of *Leaflets* were issued, as well as five little *Booklets*, an enormous quantity of which were sold. *Draft Letterpress Posters* were sent to every constituency for localisation and printing locally. Of *Coloured Picture Posters* twenty-seven were issued of eleven designs in five sizes ; over half a million were circulated. For the designs of almost all these Mr. F. Carruthers Gould was responsible, some being specially drawn and some being taken from *Westminster Gazette* cartoons. The Department and the party are under a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. Gould for his invaluable assistance. The posters were admirably printed by the Avenue Press. Space does not permit of any detailed reference to the services of the Department in the matter of *Election Forms*, *Flag posters*, *Flag cards*, etc.

Coming to what may be described as the normal work of the Department, the number of Guinea Subscribers continues steadily and



satisfactorily to grow, as the following figures show :—

|      |     |     |     |     |     |      |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 1903 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 756  |
| 1904 | ..  | ... | ... | ... | ... | 984  |
| 1905 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1204 |
| 1906 | ..  | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1326 |

Increased appreciation is shown of the advantages of a system by which for a guinea a subscriber gets all the publications of the Department as issued in addition to three bound volumes—*The Liberal Year Book*, *The Liberal Magazine*, and *Pamphlets and Leaflets*.

*The Liberal Magazine* is as useful as ever and still grows in circulation, the average monthly sale for 1905 being over 3,600.

The second issue for 1906 of *The Liberal Year Book* maintains the high reputation secured by the first ; the volume has already taken its place as an established work of reference. *The House of Commons Poll Book 1885–1906* was published after the General Election, and may be regarded as a special supplement to the *Year Book*, the latter having necessarily been issued just before the elections took place.

The “Recording Angel” (or *The Record of Members’ Votes*) was, as usual, found to be of the greatest possible service at the General Election and provided plenty of ammunition for the discomfiture of retiring Unionist members, most of whom, indeed, succumbed to its attack. The record is now complete from 1866 up to the end of the last Parliament (1905).

The Department loses heavily by the resignation of Mr. Birrell as Chairman on his becoming a member of the Cabinet. For nearly fourteen years Mr. Birrell had been Chairman of the Committee of the Department, and there is no need to insist on the great services he rendered the party in that capacity. He is succeeded by Mr. R. C. Lehmann, M.P., who may be confidently counted on to maintain the high traditions of his three predecessors in office—Mr. Bryce, Mr. Acland, and Mr. Birrell. But it is no exaggeration to say, as the past and present Chairmen would be the first to admit, that it is on Mr. Geake, as Secretary of the Department and Editor of the *Liberal Magazine*, that the brunt of the work falls, and that to him the principal credit belongs. His keen intellect, his remarkable grasp of all political questions, his untiring zeal and devotion to a branch of our party work

which he has made so peculiarly his own, call for grateful acknowledgment by this Committee, and by all for whom they speak.

Mr John Henderson has more than justified his appointment as Assistant Secretary. The whole staff of the Department worked with a splendid will and determination, both at the Election, and in the long months of preparation for that event, and it is pleasant for the Committee here to record their high appreciation of the manner in which the work was discharged.

## THE GENERAL COMMITTEE.

The annual business meeting of the General Committee was held at Derby on March 16th. The chair was taken in the first instance by Mr. John Massie, M.P., Treasurer of the Federation.

Mr. Edward Evans, President of the Liverpool Liberal Federal Council, was, for the eleventh time, unanimously elected Chairman of Committee, on the motion of Mr. H. H. Raphael, M.P. (Derbyshire-Southern Division), seconded by Mr. Frank Wright (President of the Birmingham Liberal Association).

Mr. Evans having taken the chair and briefly returned thanks for his re-election, the delegates proceeded to the election of the Executive Committee. The election created considerable interest owing to there being no fewer than twelve members of the old Committee ineligible for re-election, a number unprecedented in the history of the Federation. This was due to the fact that in addition to the members compulsorily retired under Rule V., there were nine members (excluding the President, Mr. Birrell, and the Treasurer, Mr. Massie), who, having been elected to the House of Commons at the recent General Election, were not eligible, under the constitution of the Federation, for re-election on its Executive—a democratic provision which ensures that the governing body of the Federation shall be drawn from the rank and file of the party. For the twenty seats on the Executive there were thirty candidates, eight being members of the old Committee who offered themselves for re-election, nine nominated by the Executive, and thirteen by affiliated associations.

The following twenty gentlemen were elected :—

|                                                                                                             | VOTES |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Right Hon. A. H. D. ACLAND (Scarborough) ... ..                                                             | 299   |
| Mr. WILLIAM ANGUS (President of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal Association) ... ..                           | 284   |
| Mr. H. B. PRIESTMAN (President of the Bradford Liberal Association) ... ..                                  | 264   |
| Mr. FRANK WRIGHT (President of the Birmingham Liberal Association) ... ..                                   | 262   |
| Mr. ALFRED BARRAN (Leeds Liberal Federation) ... ..                                                         | 260   |
| Mr. A. H. BURGESS (Hon. Secretary of the Harborough (Leicestershire) Liberal Association) ... ..            | 253   |
| Mr. GEORGE LEVESON-GOWER (Chairman of Executive, Home Counties Division of the National Liberal Federation) | 251   |
| Mr. CHARLES TOWNSEND (President of the Bristol Liberal Federation) ... ..                                   | 251   |
| Mr. ROBERT BIRD (Vice-President of the Cardiff Liberal Association) ... ..                                  | 250   |
| Mr. HAROLD ELVERSTON (Treasurer of the Manchester Liberal Federation) ... ..                                | 234   |
| Mr. CHARLES H. RADFORD (President of the Plymouth Liberal Association) ... ..                               | 222   |
| Mr. B. S. JOHNSON (President of the Bootle Division (Lancs.) Liberal Association) ... ..                    | 221   |
| Mr. P. W. BUNTING (Vice-President of the South St. Pancras Liberal Association) ... ..                      | 216   |
| Mr. J. B. MORRELL (Treasurer of the York Liberal Association)... ..                                         | 214   |
| Mr. T. CARTER BEELEY (President of the Hyde Division (Cheshire) Liberal Association) ... ..                 | 204   |
| Mr. GEORGE J. BENTHAM (Chairman of the Hull and District Liberal Federation) ... ..                         | 201   |
| Mr. J. BAMFORD SLACK (Vice-President of the South St. Pancras Liberal Association) ... ..                   | 189   |
| Mr. LEWIS MOIR (Vice-President of the Ipswich Liberal Association) ... ..                                   | 174   |
| Mr. J. D. GILBERT (London Liberal Federation) ... ..                                                        | 173   |
| Mr. THOMAS FLETCHER (President of the Derby Liberal Association) ... ..                                     | *157  |

\* Two Candidates polled 157 Votes, and of these, Mr. Fletcher was elected on a show of hands.

*Not Elected.*

- Mr. J. O. ANDREWS (Barkston Ash Division (Yorks) Liberal Association).
- Mr. JOHN BAYLEY (Hon. Secretary of the Wellington Division (Salop) (Liberal Association).
- Mr. SYDNEY BRAIN (President of the Reading Liberal Association).
- Mr. C. A. V. CONYBEARE (Vice-President of the Dartford Division (Kent) Liberal Council).
- Mr. EDMUND LEIGH (President of the North-West Staffordshire Liberal Association).
- Mr. EDWARD M. NUNNELEY (Vice-President of the East Northamptonshire Liberal Association).
- Mr. WILLIAM H. REED (Vice-President of the Tiverton Division (Devon) Liberal Association).
- Mr. G. F. ROWE (Vice-President of the Hampstead Liberal Association).
- Mr. J. H. THEWLIS (Manchester).
- Mr. A. E. WITHEY (Vice-President of the North Wilts Liberal Association).

Of the twenty members elected as above, Mr. A. H. D. Acland, Mr. Priestman, Mr. Elverston, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Morrell, Mr. Beeley, Mr. Bentham, Mr. Bamford Slack, Mr. Moir, Mr. Gilbert, and Mr. Fletcher are elected for the first time, while Mr. Townsend returns to the Committee after an absence of seven years. Dr. Spence Watson was one of the twelve members of the Committee who were not eligible for re-election. Thus, for the first time in the history of the Federation, Dr. Watson's name is absent from the list of its governing body.

Elected a vice-president at the inaugural meeting in May, 1877, Dr. Spence Watson continued in that office until 1890, when he was elected president, a position which he occupied for eleven years. His retirement from the presidency was made the occasion of the presentation of his portrait, painted by Sir George Reid, and subscribed for by members of the Liberal party. He was a member of the Executive Committee from 1901 to March, 1906, and treasurer *pro tem* in 1902-3.

Ill-health prevented Dr. Spence Watson from making any regular attendance at meetings of the Executive Committee during the past

year, and he now retires under a rule which, some years ago, he himself introduced to provide for the automatic election of new members through the compulsory retirement of the three members who have made the fewest attendances during the year. The Committee cannot allow Dr. Watson's name to disappear from the list of their number without once more saying how deep is his hold on the affections of every member of this Federation. No one is so closely identified with the history of our organisation, and no one has rendered it such devoted service. He carries with him in his retirement the warm esteem and the grateful regard of countless Liberals to whom the example of his life is at once a challenge and an inspiration.

The following resolution, submitted on behalf of the Executive Committee, was moved by Mr. John Massie, M.P., seconded by Sir Thomas Roe, M.P., supported by Mr. F. Hall, M.P., Mr. Geo. Nicholls, M.P., and Mr. Hamar Greenwood, M.P., and carried unanimously (the words in italics were sent up as a rider by the Dartford Division of Kent Liberal Association, and adopted by the Executive):—

"That this General Committee of the National Liberal Federation tenders to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman its warmest good wishes on his accession to the high office of Prime Minister; congratulates him upon the formation of a Liberal Ministry universally regarded as strong and representative of the whole party; rejoices at the great majority with which the Ministry has been armed by the electors; and expresses its confidence that the Prime Minister and his colleagues will command, and will receive, the vigorous and whole-hearted support of the party at large in the work which lies before them in this newly elected Parliament.

"Further, this Committee offers its warm congratulations to the members of the affiliated Liberal Associations of this Federation, *and the Women's Liberal Associations throughout the country*, upon the share borne by them in a great and historic campaign, and records its thanks to all who, by their earnest and self-sacrificing labours, have contributed to secure so triumphant a victory for Liberalism and Free Trade."

The following resolution (submitted on behalf of the Wimbledon Division Liberal Association) was also passed:—

"That the General Committee of the National Liberal Federation desires to emphasise the necessity for immediate legislation to abolish the many anomalies of the present electoral system, and especially plural voting."

At the conclusion of the meeting the delegates were entertained at tea at the Victoria-street Congregational Schools, on the invitation of the officers of the Derby Liberal Association.

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## THE FISCAL QUESTION.

The outstanding event in the history of the fiscal question for the last twelve months is the magnificent verdict in favour of Free Trade given by the constituencies at the General Election. When the time came the Unionist party attempted to shirk the issue, and made a desperate attempt to get the election to turn on the question of Home Rule. But the country was determined to say what it thought of the manœuvres of Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain, linked together as they were against Free Trade; and the verdict was clear and unmistakable. The Tariff Reformers pretend that the "whole hogger" who boldly went for Mr. Chamberlain's proposals without any Balfourian reservations fared better at the polls than the candidate who declared himself to be a pure Balfourian. As a fact, both kinds of candidate fared equally ill. Two facts are at any rate notable. The first, that the seven members of Mr. Chamberlain's Tariff Commission who stood—all for Tory seats—were defeated; the second, that some of the greatest and most sensational Liberal and Free Trade victories were won where Mr. Chamberlain himself had preached his new fiscal gospel. The general verdict shows that the contrary result in Birmingham must have been due to personal, rather than political, considerations.

Mr. Balfour's theory that Unionist internal difficulties on the fiscal question would disappear once the party were in opposition was quickly belied by what happened between the Unionist defeat and the meeting of Parliament. Mr. Chamberlain threatened independent action unless the Unionist party's line was such as he could approve, and after a great deal of trampling behind the curtain the compact of the Valentine letters was disclosed. Letters passed between the two Unionist leaders on February 14th, 1906. Mr. Balfour wrote to Mr. Chamberlain to say that, "while it is at present unnecessary to

prescribe the exact methods by which these objects are to be attained, and inexpedient to permit differences of opinion as to these methods to divide the party, though other means may be possible, the establishment of a moderate general tariff on manufactured goods, not imposed for the purpose of raising prices or giving artificial protection against legitimate competition, and the imposition of a small duty on foreign corn are not in principle objectionable, and should be adopted, if shown to be necessary for the attainment of the ends in view or for purposes of revenue." Mr. Chamberlain wrote at once to Mr. Balfour to express "entire agreement" with what he had said and adding that in giving effect to this policy any services he could render would be "entirely at your (*Mr. Balfour's*) disposal." A Unionist party meeting next day passed a vote of confidence in Mr. Balfour; in his absence at the opening of Parliament such Opposition as had survived the flood was led by Mr. Chamberlain. Both voted later in the Session against Sir James Kitson's motion in which the House of Commons by 475 votes to 98 declared that "recognising that in the recent General Election the people of the United Kingdom have demonstrated their unqualified fidelity to the principle and practice of Free Trade," it "deemed it right to record its determination to resist any proposal, whether by way of taxation upon foreign corn, or of the creation of a general tariff upon foreign goods, to create in the country a system of Protection." A handful of Unionists voted with the Government, a few more stayed away, but the Opposition whips told against the motion, and the Unionist party is at last officially and definitely committed to a policy which, if necessary, will include a tax on corn and a general tariff. The Free-traders in the Unionist party remain in it, but do not profess to be able to follow the Unionist leaders on the fiscal question.

The attack on Free Trade has been warded off in splendid style, but it is certain to be renewed, not improbably under more favourable conditions, since a Government is always more open to attack than an Opposition. It is, therefore, of the first importance that the Free Trade defence should be vigorously maintained, and that the missionary efforts of the Tariff Reformers should be met by a continuous exposition of the case for the existing fiscal system. If that be done the Free Trade citadel ought to be impregnable.

## THE EDUCATION BILL.

In the Federation Report presented at Scarborough three years ago, the first after the passing of the Education Act of 1902, the following passage occurs:—

“It must be clearly understood that the Liberal party do not look upon the Education Act as the result of a struggle in which, as the defeated party, their duty is now to accept it as a settlement. It might have been different had the issue been clearly stated, had the measure reflected the feeling of the country, had its passage through Parliament been so conducted as to give it a backing of moral authority. As it is, it will be one of the supreme and immediate objects of the Liberal party so to alter the law as to secure for the country a truly national system of education, based on effective popular control and freed altogether from religious tests and sectarian influences.”

It is appropriate that Mr. Birrell, who then moved the adoption of the Report containing this passage, should now be the Minister of Education who in the first session of a Liberal Parliament brings in a Bill to remedy the wrongs inflicted by the Act of 1902, and to take a great step forward in the improvement of our educational system. As to some of the details of the Bill, there may be differences amongst Liberals, but there is general and hearty agreement on its main principles:—

1. All elementary schools maintained out of public funds to be under complete public management and control. Those who provide the money are to control its expenditure.
2. No religious tests for teachers.
3. In all cases where denominational teaching is permitted for children whose parents desire it, the cost of such teaching to be wholly met by the denominationalists themselves. No one to be asked to pay a farthing, whether out of taxes or rates, towards denominational teaching.
4. Religious teaching of an undenominational character, under the Cowper-Temple Clause, to be retained in all schools, at the option of the local authority.

The Bill has led to angry protests on the part of certain denominationalists, who forget, however, at least two fundamental facts of the situation. The first is that the Government is as clearly authorised to legislate on the lines of the present Bill as the last Tory Govern-



ment was not authorised to pass the Act of 1902. In 1900 the electors were assured that their votes affected the South African settlement, and that alone; the votes of Liberals were solicited—and many secured—on that plea. In 1906 every elector knew that one of the first steps of the Liberal Government would be legislative proposals to secure complete public control and management of the schools, and to abolish religious tests. The second fact overlooked is the change in the situation created by the acceptance by the voluntary schools of assistance out of the rates. Archbishop Temple warned his friends that this would be to place these schools on a “slippery slope,” and they have only themselves to thank for having neglected the warning. It was obvious from the beginning that the terms upon which rate aid was obtained were so inequitable and one-sided that they could only stand so long as the denominationalists commanded a Parliamentary majority. That Parliamentary majority has now been swept away by the electors, and the State has to tear up the so-called bargain of 1902, as obtained under duress, and being (to use an expressive legal phrase) unconscionable. Even so, what may perhaps be called the vested interests of denominationalism are treated with all possible consideration. The State is to pay for its use of the schoolhouses of the denominationalists; in all existing voluntary schools there will be, even when they become provided schools, facilities of one kind or another for denominational teaching at the hands of that denomination with which the school has been associated. If this consideration is met with discourtesy, and even contumely, it is only because denominationalists cannot reconcile themselves to the loss of the privileged position which they seem to have persuaded themselves they had firmly secured by the Act of 1902.

Out of the criticisms to which the Bill has been subject, there emerge three main lines of attack. In the first place, there is the attack on Cowper-Temple teaching—the undenominational type of religious instruction which since 1870 has been provided in the Board and Council schools. The Bishop of Birmingham has in effect said that this teaching is worthless. Other clerical descriptions of it are that it “undermines” the Anglican faith, and that it is “a form of religious teaching infinitely worse than secularism.”

Because it is a form of religious instruction which most Nonconformists (though not Nonconformists alone) think it is fair and reasonable should be given in the schools, we are assured that it is "Nonconformist religious teaching," and the "endowment" of Nonconformity. The best answer to such a remarkable attack is perhaps to quote the present Archbishop of Canterbury, who (when Bishop of Rochester) said in 1894: "To declare it to be impossible profitably to convey to the mind of a little child the sacred lessons which Holy Scripture gives in story and precept, and Psalm and Parable, and, above all, in the life and works of our Blessed Lord, unaccompanied for the moment by Church doctrine of a distinctive sort—to declare this is, it seems to me, to contradict the simple experience of a thousand Christian homes." If the attack on teaching of this kind is persisted in, it may conceivably lead to the exclusion of the Bible from the schools, but the responsibility will at all events not be that of the Liberal party. In the second place, there is an outcry because the trust deeds of voluntary schools are interfered with. Here it is forgotten that the mischief was done by the Act of 1902—here was another "slippery slope," on which the schools were placed in order to get rate-aid. In that year Mr. Balfour, attacked by Lord Hugh Cecil for tampering with the trust deeds, said:—

"My noble friend complained that the Government have tampered with trust deeds, and I do not deny that the Bill does affect the trust deeds of voluntary schools, and I do not think that any Bill for admitting voluntary schools to any share in public money could avoid making alterations in their trust deeds. The change in the position of schools is so great, is so fundamental, that some alteration is necessary unless these schools are to be entirely left outside the scope of our legislation. But supposing it were a crime to touch these trust deeds, who incited the Government to commit that crime? Why, the two Houses of Convocation."

Lord Halsbury, in the House of Lords, made, in substance, precisely the same defence. The Liberal party can with equanimity bear attacks the brunt of which has to be shared by a Tory ex-Prime Minister and a Tory ex-Lord Chancellor. In the third place, there is an outcry that the voluntary schools are to be confiscated. It would be just as true to say that the land upon which our railways run was confiscated. It is true that it is proposed to give the State power on five days of the week to use the schoolhouse, but the owners are to be

generously dealt with, due regard being had to the fact that the majority of schools belong to trustees whose duty it is to see that the building is used for educational purposes.

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## THE SITUATION AND OUTLOOK.

Mr. Asquith may be congratulated on having, in his first Budget, made the best of a difficult situation. The Liberal party is pledged to retrenchment, but the Liberal Government, when preparing the estimates for the current financial year, had only been a few weeks in office, with the result that any considerable reductions were practically impossible. Mr. Asquith frankly stated in his Budget speech that the £111,000,000 which the estimates provide for the Supply Services is an "excessive sum." He "hopes and believes" next year to be able to announce a "substantial saving" on this gigantic total. Bearing this in mind, the Budget can be pronounced an excellent one. The realised surplus of £3,500,000 goes to its natural destination—the reduction of the National Debt. The prospective surplus for 1906-7 is £3,000,000, and (exclusive of a balance of £400,000 for contingencies) this is spent on the abolition (as from November 1st) of the coal duty, the reduction of the duty on tea from 6d. to 5d., a grant of £135,000 to necessitous school districts, the inauguration of various Postal reforms, and last, but not least, the increase of the Sinking Fund by half a million. With the money at Mr. Asquith's disposal, it is difficult to see how he could have used it more wisely. The coal tax was a hindrance and a burden, which had to be removed in the interests of the freedom of trade. Tea is an article of universal consumption, and the community as a whole will benefit by this lowering of the tax, either in the price it pays or the quality it receives. Mr. Asquith is in particular to be congratulated on his policy as to the reduction of debt. He provides more money for this purpose, he announces the abandonment of the policy by which the cost of naval and military works has been met out of borrowed money, and not out of current revenue. The result has been great expenditure, and an alarming increase in the total amount of our national indebtedness. Nothing is more important than a substantial reduction of the total amount of that indebted-

ness, if trade and commerce are to be on a thoroughly sound basis. We note with satisfaction that a strong Committee is to be appointed to inquire into the graduation and differentiation of the income tax. If money is to be found for social reform it is essential that the present scale of national expenditure should be lowered, and that, in addition, fresh sources of revenue should be tapped. Mr. Asquith's first Budget is, we hope and believe, the preface to the reforms which will be worked out in succeeding Budgets.

With regard to the Government's programme of legislation, the Education Bill is dealt with separately elsewhere. A comprehensive Bill has been introduced to amend the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1897, and though it is not possible yet to make the measure a final one, a large additional number of workers are given the benefit of that Act, compensation is given for injury to health as well as to life and limb, whilst there are important amendments in the law in the many directions in which it has been tried and found wanting. The object of the Trade Disputes Bill is to restore to the workers the right of effective combination, of which they have been deprived by recent judicial decisions. We are glad to know that the Bill is now certain to pass in a form which will be satisfactory alike to the Liberal party and the Trade Unionists. The Merchant Shipping Bill does a great deal to level up the conditions under which our shipping trade is carried on, and is beneficial to both shipowners and seamen. The Justices of the Peace Bill gets rid in counties of the indefensible property qualification, which in boroughs was long ago discarded. The Plural Voting Bill will remove a long-standing injustice to which the Federation has repeatedly drawn attention. There are also to be measures dealing with Scotch Crofters' holdings, and Irish Labourers, and for the equalisation of rates in London, and the amendment of the law as to unemployed workmen. This constitutes an excellent programme for the first Session, and Liberals look with confidence to these measures being placed upon the Statute Book this year. As to Ireland, the King's Speech contained the satisfactory announcement that the Government have under consideration plans for improving and effecting economies in the system of government in Ireland, and for introducing into it means for associating the Irish

people with the conduct of Irish affairs. What is desired is that the government of Ireland, in reliance upon the ordinary law, should be carried on, so far as existing circumstances permit, in a spirit regardful of the wishes and sentiments of the Irish people.

In administration the Government has adopted the policy of a fuller recognition of trade unionism in dealing with the workers in the great Government departments of the Admiralty, War Office, and Post Office. This has given great satisfaction to the workers themselves, and the results can hardly fail to be productive of good, both to the State as employer and to those whom it employs.

In South Africa the Government inherits a situation of much difficulty and complexity. It has been decided to give responsible government at the earliest possible moment to the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, a decision in entire harmony with accepted Liberal tradition in dealing with our colonies. As to the employment of Chinese on the Rand, the Government took immediate steps to prevent any further importation, though that could only be partially effected, owing to the large number of licences and permits granted just before the last Government went out of office. In many important particulars the ordinance has been amended so as to make its terms less incompatible with free conditions, and the Government has decided that if and when an elected Transvaal Government makes a new ordinance, it shall not receive Imperial support unless its conditions are free from any taint of slavery. That support can be withheld in more ways than one, since the Chinese are at present recruited under direct Imperial, not Colonial, sanction. In Natal there has been a regrettable rising amongst the natives. A request for information as to the proposed execution of twelve of these led to a serious complication with the Natal Government, and to a threat of resignation on the part of the Natal Ministers. The crisis happily was of the briefest duration, but it is a matter of regret that the Natal Ministry should have been persuaded on such insufficient grounds that the Imperial Government was intending to act arbitrarily or unreasonably. The way in which such action on their part may be turned to party purposes was illustrated by the fierce attacks made on the Liberal Government by members of the Opposition in this country.

The Liberal Government have made an excellent start. In many directions progress must necessarily be a work of time after a prolonged period of Tory rule, lasting (with one short interval), for twenty years. But the Government has been armed with a great majority, and the country expects, as we are confident it will get, a policy of what we may call judicious boldness. Everything cannot be achieved at once, and where heroic efforts would only fail, the problem must be attacked in detail. The Committee of the Federation heartily congratulates the delegates who come to Liverpool on the happy circumstances under which they meet to confer together, and to welcome Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, not indeed for the first time, but for the first time as Prime Minister. The Committee recognises that the improved political conditions are in no small degree due to the work which the delegates have so patiently, loyally, and unflinchingly rendered in the constituencies under circumstances never easy, and often difficult and discouraging. The only thing needed to maintain the victory so magnificently won is a continuance in the days of success of the efforts which culminated in the overthrow, last January, of Toryism and Protection.

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# NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION.

## STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ON GENERAL WORKING ACCOUNT.

Dr.

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31st, 1905.

Cr.

| RECEIPTS.                                                        |     |           | PAYMENTS.                                                                                      |        |       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------|
|                                                                  | £   | s. d.     |                                                                                                | £      | s. d. |
| To Cash at Bankers, Jan. 1st,                                    |     |           | By Salaries and Wages, and Fees of Agents and Organisers .....                                 | 1,893  | 4 6   |
| 1905 .....                                                       | 289 | 19 1      | " Registration, Organisation, and Travelling Expenses .....                                    | 478    | 12 10 |
| " Cash in hands of Secretaries                                   | 100 | 0 0       | " Printing, Stationery, Newspapers, &c.                                                        | 167    | 1 8   |
|                                                                  |     |           | " Public Meetings, Lectures, Conferences and Annual and other Meetings of the Federation ..... | 319    | 4 2   |
| " Subscriptions and Donations and Grants from Special Fund ..... |     | 3,558 3 8 | " Rent, Coals and Lighting .....                                                               | 269    | 5 2   |
|                                                                  |     |           | " Postages and Telegrams .....                                                                 | 217    | 6 5   |
|                                                                  |     |           | " Office and Incidental Expenses .....                                                         | 132    | 18 0  |
|                                                                  |     |           |                                                                                                | 3,477  | 12 9  |
|                                                                  |     |           | " Cash at Bankers, Dec. 31st, 1905 ...                                                         | 420    | 10 0  |
|                                                                  |     |           | " Cash in hands of Secretaries .....                                                           | 50     | 0 0   |
|                                                                  |     |           |                                                                                                | 470    | 10 0  |
|                                                                  |     |           |                                                                                                | £3,948 | 2 9   |

Audited and found correct,  
(Signed) C. C. SMITH & RICHARDS,

*Chartered Accountants,*

COBDEN CHAMBERS, CORPORATION STREET,  
BIRMINGHAM.

March 6th, 1906.

(Signed) JOHN MASSIE, Treasurer.

£3,948 2 9

PROCEEDINGS  
AT THE  
TWENTY-EIGHTH  
ANNUAL MEETING  
OF THE  
NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION  
*HELD AT LIVERPOOL,*  
ON  
MAY 23RD, 24TH, AND 25TH, 1906.



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*Most of the speeches here recorded have been revised by the speakers mainly from the excellent reports of the "LIVERPOOL POST," and "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN."*

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PROCEEDINGS  
AT THE  
TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL MEETING  
OF THE  
NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION  
*HELD AT LIVERPOOL,*  
MAY 23RD AND 24TH, 1906.

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## FIRST SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 23RD.

The first Session of the Council was held in the Hope Hall at two o'clock. Mr. Edward Evans (Chairman of the General Committee of the Federation) at first occupied the chair.

Among those who were present at one or more of the meetings were the following:—

The Lord Brassey, the Lord Stanley of Alderley, Sir John Brunner, Bart., M.P., Mr. J. F. L. Brunner, M.P., the Right Hon. R. R. Cherry, K.C., M.P. (Attorney-General for Ireland), Mr. Ellis J. Griffith, M.P., Mr. R. G. Glendinning, M.P., Mr. Alfred Mond, M.P., Mr. W. R. Rea, M.P., Mr. A. H. Scott, M.P., Mr. Henry Vivian, M.P., Mr. George Whiteley, M.P., Mr. George White, M.P. (Several members of Parliament who had been announced to take part in the proceedings were unavoidably absent owing to pressure of their Parliamentary duties.) The following officers and members of the Executive Committee of the National Liberal Federation: The Right Hon. A. H. D. Acland (President), Mr. Edward Evans (Chairman of Committee), Mr. Robert Bird (Treasurer), Mr. William Angus, Mr. T. Carter Beeley, Mr. George J. Bentham, Mr. P. W. Bunting, Mr. Harold Elverston, Mr. Thomas Fletcher, Mr. B. S. Johnson, Mr. George Leveson-Gower, Mr. Lewis Moir, Mr. J. B. Morrell, Mr. Charles H. Radford, Mr. J. Bamford Slack, Mr. Frank Wright, Mr. Robert A. Hudson (Secretary), Mr. Frank Barter (Assistant Secretary), Mr. Charles Geake (Liberal Publication Department), Mr. W. M. Crook (Secretary Home Counties Liberal Federation), Mr. J. Clarke (Assistant Secretary Home Counties Liberal Federation), Mr. J. Renwick Seager (Liberal Central Association), Mr. George Green (Chairman Scottish Liberal Association), Mr. A. D. Wood and Mr. W. Webster (Secretaries Scottish Liberal Association); the officers of the Liverpool Liberal Federal Council, viz.: Mr. Edward

Evans (President), Mr. Richard D. Holt (Treasurer), Mr. Stuart Deacon (Hon. Secretary), Mr. Bertram Furniss (Secretary; Mr. A. G. Jeans (Chairman Liverpool Reform Club), Mr. G. E. Adams (Secretary Liverpool Reform Club), Mr. George G. Gilchrist (Chairman Liverpool Junior Reform Club), Mr. C. H. Kirkus (Hon. Secretary Liverpool Junior Reform Club), Mr. J. O. Andrews (Barkston Ash), Mr. Ald. Bowring (Liverpool), Mr. Alfred Booth (Liverpool), Mr. Allan H. Bright (Liverpool), Col. J. Clifton Brown, Mr. J. W. Callie (Financial Reform Association), Mr. W. H. Chadwick ("The Old Chartist"), Mr. Thomas Gibson (Scottish Liberal Association), Mr. Frank Hollins (Preston), Mr. Fred Horne (Ludlow), Mr. H. S. Leon (Bletchley), Judge Macpherson (Scottish Liberal Association), Mr. Jonathan Samuel (Durham), Mr. James Stewart (Scottish Liberal Association). With very few exceptions every constituency in England and Wales was represented at the Sessions of the Federation Council. Of the 3,500 delegates nominated by the affiliated Liberal Associations, 1,423 were present at the First Session, and 1,497 were present at the Second Session (the largest attendance at a Council annual meeting since the memorable gathering in Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1891, when Mr. Gladstone was present). The attendance included in nearly every case the President or other officers of the Liberal Association represented.

### Welcome from the Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR OF LIVERPOOL (Mr. Joseph Ball), who was introduced by the Chairman, said he had the honour that day to pay his respects to the chairman and to the delegates assembled under the auspices of the National Liberal Federation. It was a rule in that city that the Lord Mayor for the time being knew no politics, and he did not think he was transgressing what had been a proper custom by coming amongst them that day. His presence there as Chief Magistrate was dictated by the fact that he desired to convey to them in the heartiest and most cordial manner a welcome to the city. No doubt many of them were strangers in that part of the country, and probably only knew Liverpool by name as a great seaport. Such it was; and they would do well in the spare half-hours they might have to pay a visit to the docks, and there see the enormous shipping interests and development of commerce. Liverpool had beautiful parks skirting the city; their system of electric lighting and tramways was considered a very good one; they had monuments to famous men; whilst the Art Gallery, with its fine permanent collection of pictures, would interest those who had appreciation of art and beauty displayed upon canvas. Their chairman, Mr. Edward Evans, was a gentleman well known and esteemed in that city. Quite apart from politics, he was regarded by all sections of the community with great respect, and it must be a gratification to him that they were meeting in the city which knew him so well. He hoped they would have excellent meetings, and that their visit to Liverpool would create a lasting and favourable impression upon their minds. In concluding he expressed his warm sympathy with the Prime Minister in the illness which had over-

taken his wife, and his hope that Lady Campbell-Bannerman might speedily be restored to health.

MR. EDWARD EVANS moved a vote of thanks to the Lord Mayor for his hearty welcome. His lordship's engagements were many, and his desire during his year of office was to do the utmost in his power to adorn the position which he held.

The vote of thanks was adopted with enthusiasm, and briefly acknowledged by the Lord Mayor, who then retired.

### Letter from the Prime Minister.

The CHAIRMAN said he was sorry to have to read a letter which he had received that morning from Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. The letter was as follows:—

10, Downing Street, Whitehall,  
London, S.W.

May 22nd, 1906.

MY DEAR EVANS,—I have been looking forward to the Liverpool meeting of the Federation, when I should have an opportunity of making still closer acquaintance with your delegates, and of sharing their exultation over the past and their hopes and confidence for the future.

But to my great regret and disappointment, I find myself unable to leave London, for reasons which members of the Federation will appreciate, and I must forego the pleasure of meeting them. Mr. Lloyd-George has kindly undertaken, at my request, to address your great meeting on Thursday night.

The occasion is such as has not presented itself for many years. A Liberal Government has been formed; and, being installed in office, it has appealed to the judgment of the country, and has been confirmed in power by an almost unexampled majority. We are all sensible of the large share which your association and those who as delegates will take part in these meetings have had in the achievement of this result. And it will be a satisfaction to all of them to know that your late president is not only a member of the Cabinet, but has been chosen, with universal approval, to take charge of perhaps the most important and critical of all the works the Government has to undertake, namely, that of creating out of the injustices and confusion of recent legislation a thoroughly sound, democratic, and equitable education system. I fervently trust that the Government will prove equal to the task imposed upon it; that it will not be deterred by difficulties; that it will courageously apply in power the principles it proclaimed when in Opposition. If it does so there is no fear; the (political) heathen may rage, and the Opposition may imagine (as they often do) a vain thing, but if we are true to ourselves in the Cabinet, in the House of Commons, and in the constituencies, we have a great opportunity of strengthening the commonwealth, of relieving and elevating the mass of our countrymen, and founding and building up a new era of peace and prosperity.

I know that you and your comrades at Liverpool will give us fresh inspiration and encouragement for the hard battle we have to fight.—With all good wishes, believe me, dear Mr. Evans, yours sincerely,

H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

Mr. Evans added that the sympathy of that gathering went out to the Prime Minister in his trouble. He knew, and Mr. Acland knew, that Sir Henry was looking forward eagerly to visiting Liverpool. Furthermore, that night a most important division was taking place in the House of Commons, and hardly a single member of Parliament was permitted to leave London. Under the circumstances, the committee had been obliged to make several changes in the speakers to the resolutions.

### Election of President and Treasurer.

The CHAIRMAN (in the absence of Mr. C. E. Schwann, M.P.) moved:—

“That the Right Hon. Arthur H. D. Acland be elected President, and that Mr. Robert Bird be elected Treasurer for the ensuing year.”

Dr. Spence Watson and Mr. Augustine Birrell were hard presidents to follow. They were extremely fortunate in securing the services as president of Mr. Acland, who was a man of great political experience, an ex-Cabinet Minister, one of the best Ministers of Education, and one who had studied that and all other political questions. They owed to him a great debt for coming forth from his retirement, and giving them his invaluable services. As to Mr. Bird, he was an ideal Treasurer, and would always bring discretion and knowledge to bear on all their discussions.

MR. FRANK WRIGHT (Birmingham), (in the absence of Mr. Percy Illingworth, M.P.) seconded, remarking that with Mr. Bird finding the ways and means, and Mr. Acland pointing out the path they were to go, they might look with great contentedness to the future. He was sure that Mr. Acland would not only maintain the high traditions of the Federation, but would add to them.

The SECRETARY (Mr. R. A. Hudson) read the following letters from Dr. Spence Watson and Mr. Birrell. Dr. Spence Watson said:—

May 21st, 1906.

MY DEAR HUDSON,—The time draws near for the gathering of the National Liberal Federation at Liverpool, which I much hoped to have attended, but prolonged ill-health has precluded the possibility.

I naturally think much of thirteen years ago, when we last met there for our annual gathering, and had the kindly and genial aid of our excellent Chairman of the General Committee, aid which has never been looked for in vain.

Then, as now, we met after a triumphant election, only our present triumph is phenomenal.

To me it brings the belief that the great mass of our countrymen are sick of the shams and iniquities of Tory rule, and rejoice in the straightforward, unwearied, and eloquent leadership of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who has not only received the due reward of his prolonged service, but has convinced even his opponents that he is admirably qualified to be the head of a powerful and historic party. He has succeeded in associating with himself a band of men of work and wisdom such as has never been equalled in our political history.

To us, perhaps, the centre point is the translation of our highly esteemed President to the head of the Education Department. There he has had to undertake a task of a really herculean kind, and the splendid manner in which he has grappled with his manifold difficulties, and discharged his onerous duties, has aroused our grateful sympathy and admiration, and the earnest hope for his complete success.

That he should be followed in the presidency by one who has done noble work in a similar direction, and who is looked up to and honoured, not only by the members of his own party, is indeed a matter for supreme congratulation.

It is also particularly pleasing to find that the duties of Treasurer will devolve on so long tried and valuable a friend of the Federation as Mr. Robert Bird.

May I, through you, to whom we are all so deeply indebted, send the heartiest congratulations and greetings to the whole of the assembled delegates, whom I am thankful to believe I may still call my friends.

Ever faithfully yours,

(Signed) ROBERT SPENCE WATSON.

Mr. Birrell, writing to Mr. Schwann, said:—

"I observe with pleasure you are to have the agreeable task of moving Mr. Acland into the presidential chair of the National Liberal Federation at Liverpool next Wednesday. I am sorry to depart; that may well go without saying. Mine were happy years, culminating in a great victory, but as I cannot be absent from the House of Commons with the Education Bill in Committee, I hope you will, in my name, thank the assembled delegates for the great kindness and consideration they always extended to me during my years of office. We part friends, and friends I trust we shall always remain. My successor is a man in ten thousand. By right he ought to be where I am. I am sure I wish he were. But, as that could not be, it is matter for great public rejoicing that he has consented to become President of the Federation at this particular moment. No one understands the Education question in all its branches better than he does. No one approaches it in a spirit of truer Liberalism. His authority and experience will be of immense value to the delegates in their deliberations."

The resolution was carried unanimously.

### Presidential Address by Mr. Acland.

MR. ACLAND was cheered heartily on taking the chair. He expressed his thanks for the warmth of the reception, and associated himself with the sympathetic references to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman in the illness of his wife. Speaking of the difficulties of following in the presidential chair two such men as Dr. Spence Watson and Mr. Birrell, Mr. Acland said he could only cast himself upon the friendliness and kindness of the Federation. He would try to uphold the Federation's traditions. Politics meant fighting and fighting hard, but there was no reason why in their fighting they should not act fairly, good-temperedly, and without bitterness. But you are a formidable set of people (Mr. Acland continued). The words "Gathering of wire-pullers" and "Radical caucus" we know well. We shall no doubt see them to-morrow.

But I must say that for a body of conspirators you look to me one of the most cheerful, unrepentant sets of men I have ever seen. It is rather difficult to remember, when we think what were the incidents of the last few months, that the intention of the late Government not less than a year ago was to spend this year in the House of Commons in the happy construction and discussion of a Redistribution Bill. And such a Redistribution Bill! We hope before this Government goes out for electoral reform of a very different kind from that. We welcome one instalment which already has caused some perturbation, but which is one of the simplest and justest possible measures. Only last July the Government were defeated in the House of Commons. They found it impossible to resign, because, as one eminent authority stated, resignation would cause grave public inconvenience. Well, it came a little later, and it did not cause any great public inconvenience at all. It was thought that the nation would be frightened by the advent of a Liberal Ministry. Not only were they not frightened, but it was what they had been longing for for a very long time. And so at last came the long-wished-for day. Well, we may be all of us a gathering of wire-pullers, but I am sure, however that may be, we admit that that great week was a victory, not of wire-pullers, but it was the people's victory. It was one of the most notable political victories that this country has ever seen, one in which Labour and Liberal were united, ranked side by side, and for nine-tenths of their work were aiming at one common purpose. What we ask is, How is it to be used? It is to be used, and it is being used, by measures and by administration of which we think the great masses of our fellow-citizens approve; by measures which shall be aimed one by one at the improvement of the social condition of this nation; measures well thought out, serious, determined, Radical; and by administration firm, enlightened, and sympathetic, alike with regard to foreign affairs and with regard to home. This is what we asked for; this is what we hoped to get—that the life of the people alike in town and country shall, before this Government comes to an end, be somewhat brighter, somewhat freer, somewhat more wholesome; and that something shall have been done also for the further development, still much needed, of the skill and intelligence and opportunities of the masses of the people. The words skill and intelligence bring me to say something on the question of education. There is much to be done in this country yet if we are to develop, as they might be developed, the intelligence and the skill of our fellow-citizens. It has been charged against the Bill which Mr. Birrell has laid upon the table of the House of Commons that it is not entirely an Education Bill. But why is it that the Bill cannot be wholly aimed at the development of the intelligence and the education of the country? Because there are obstacles in the way which were not of our making. It is absolutely essential before we can devote ourselves to national education as we ought that those obstacles shall be removed, and the first step towards the removal

of these difficulties is taken by Mr. Birrell's Bill. This subject, as the Prime Minister has indicated in his letter, is one of the most complicated, one of the most difficult, that any country can have to deal with. It is so in every State; it has been so in nearly every colony. When you get political warfare combined with the deep-seated feelings which religious questions raise in people's minds, you get a state of things which embarrasses and affects every Government that aims at a solution. We are in that position now. But if those who so freely criticise the present Bill will only consider what the position of the Government would have been if it had tried some of the other alternatives, they will perhaps realise that, after all, the present Bill aims at the most practical solution. There is much said, and there is much to be said, for relegating religious teaching to the church and to the home. Strong words have been used about the Bill as it stands, but I ask you what would have been the nature of the attack upon the Government Bill if it had deliberately set every form of religious teaching outside the school altogether. We are bound to answer that question when we attempt fairly to estimate the attempt which the Government are making. The Bill is based upon certain principles. First of all, for years and years we have desired to see education placed as one of those subjects which in the fullest sense of the word were a matter of self-government among the people. The Bill aims at doing that. The Bill aims, from the religious instruction point of view, at extending to the masses of our schools that which in half of our schools since 1870 onwards has been done successfully, appreciated by the parents, and carried forward without religious strife. As to property, it should be remembered that a considerable number of the buildings in which our children are now being taught are not buildings fit for the children to have the instruction which they ought to have in a highly developed country like this. I say this in no spirit of animosity, but because in these things we ought to aim at giving the children during the hours which they spend in school the very best buildings under the most healthy circumstances that we can provide. Therefore I do hope that, while there are some excellent modern buildings that might fairly and rightly be taken over—I do earnestly hope that public money will not be wasted on taking over patchwork buildings which are not creditable to our education system or permanent edifices in which our children ought to be taught. I do not propose to anticipate the discussion of to-morrow, but I should like just to say two things about two clauses of the Bill. The fourth clause is no doubt likely to be the most debatable. There are some who think that the subject might be removed from controversy in municipal elections if this clause were made what is called mandatory. I will only say, with such experience as I have, that there are great difficulties in the way. You may elude one form of controversy only to raise another, and the experience of the last few years and of anybody who had ever presided over the Education Department must be that the compulsion of unwilling authorities is a very



difficult task indeed. With regard to this clause there is one thing I want to say. The Bill provides that no "four-fifths school" shall be set up anywhere unless the minority, the one-fifth or less, is effectively provided for. Now it is of the utmost importance that that part of the clause shall be made an absolute reality. Before any school where denominational facilities are allowed is set up every possible power ought to be brought to bear to see that the authority concerned shall provide effective school supply under popular control for every single parent within reach of that school who desires it. It is not always an easy thing. I remember when I was administering the Free Education Act one used to hear sometimes that pressure was put upon parents who had a right to free education, when it was pointed out that if they got what they wanted a new school might have to be built out of the rates. It is in that direction that, from the point of view of the minority, the four-fifths clause wants most careful looking after. One other point. You will have observed that the third clause and the seventh clause are closely connected with each other. Benevolent people who are anxious to amend the Bill are urging that the first part of the seventh clause must be changed. That provides that in all the ordinary transferred schools with the two days' facilities the State-paid teachers shall be subject to the same conditions and the same restrictions which have always governed the teachers in the Board schools. The very essence of the Bill—whether the Bill be right or wrong—is the application of Cowper-Temple teaching, as it is called, under which all the Board schools have been carried on, to the schools at large. I therefore consider it to be an absolutely fundamental part of the Bill, almost as fundamental as Clause I. is, that the teachers in the transferred schools shall be in this matter of religious education like the teachers in the Board schools. It is represented as tyranny, as a breach of liberty, and the like, that these teachers in the transferred schools should not be allowed voluntarily to give denominational instruction if they like. I can see no tyranny about it. The very origin of school board religious instruction was this, that in a country where we differ so much as regards creeds and dogmas the system on which that instruction is founded is one that forbids formularies and catechisms. It has been successful, but it is in its very nature restrictive, and it is that same successful and restrictive system which, if the Bill is to be a settlement at all, must be applied to the transferred schools. Just picture to yourselves in any village the inevitable difficulties that must arise if what is called freedom and liberty were given to the teachers in these matters. There will be a rent provided, and a rent which will probably, from its very nature, be devoted to some form of religious teaching. That rent would be available for offering to the ordinary teacher of the ordinary transferred school for teaching catechisms on two days a week. Imagine the difficulty in which the teacher would be placed, the suspicions which would be aroused, and how the authorities themselves would be hampered in

their appointments by the idea that there was pressure here and there for appointing teachers to these village schools and others, not for the purpose of the normal five days' work, but for the purpose of teaching special catechisms. I dwell on this because I know well that there will be a struggle with regard to this clause, and that we shall be told we are tyrants, that we are opponents of liberty, and many other harsh things. It is not as an opponent of liberty that I state this now, but as a believer in the fundamental principles of the Bill. If the Bill is of any use at all—and I believe it is capable of laying the foundations of much better things—it is because it will remove these suspicions and these animosities. If we should be successful through this Bill in establishing in the main our education system on a true municipal foundation we can easily, when the hardest part is done in reference to elementary education, urge Mr. Birrell to lay the same foundations, true and safe, for secondary education. These schools naturally should be schools for all, and these State-aided schools should be municipal in their principles and their basis. Some of you may have seen with regard to the question of training colleges (of which we want a large new supply, State-aided and undenominational) that, even amidst all the pre-occupation which this Bill produces, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr. Birrell have found time to make an offer of 75 per cent. of the cost of building such new training colleges, which will give us a new start in our education work that we have sorely needed for many years. Let us then hope that the House of Commons will settle this great problem themselves without interference from any other place. You will have noticed in your contemplations of that other place what an extraordinary thing it is that while the Liberals are out of office the House of Lords goes fast asleep. Ever since we went out of office we have hardly seen a sign of life. In 1902 they opened their eyes for a moment, because the Bill of 1902, as it passed out of the Commons, was not quite good enough for them. Last year they gave themselves a little shake and gave notice that they were going to be alive, because they foresaw intelligently events which were coming. They protested that they had been too much neglected and that they did not have time to consider the measures which were sent up to them. The protest was in vain, but this year we shall hear a great deal on these lines. The watch-dogs are there now. Both leaders of the opposite party have given notice to the Lords in connection with the Education Bill—one of them in the House of Commons and one of them outside—and therefore we may be sure that the days of slumber are over. They will come out of the cave which we call the Upper Chamber, and in the course of the next few months, I hope, we shall hear a good deal about them. I don't think you forget the last words spoken in the House of Commons by the greatest statesman of the last century. He said that "the differences between the House of Commons and the House of Lords were not of a temporary or a casual nature merely, but differences of conviction, differences of

prepossession, differences of mental habit, and differences of fundamental tendency." And he said then what, no doubt, we have felt for years and shall have to assert as he asserted it. He said that "a state of things was in existence of which we are compelled to say that in our judgment it cannot continue." No, Gentlemen, we contend that there is only one legislative House representative of the national will, and that is the House of Commons.

MR. ROBERT BIRD also briefly returned thanks on his election as Treasurer.

### **Vote of Thanks to Retiring President and Treasurer.**

MR. A. E. W. MASON, M.P. (Coventry) moved:—

"That this Council tenders to Mr. Birrell its warm congratulations upon his entrance to the Cabinet as President of the Board of Education. It views with very real regret his retirement from the presidency of this Federation, records its profound sense and most grateful appreciation of the service he has rendered to the party, both as President of the National Liberal Federation and as Chairman of the Liberal Publication Department; and offers to him its earnest good wishes in the high and responsible work which falls to him in the first Session of the new Parliament. The council also congratulates Mr. Massie upon his election to the House of Commons, deeply regrets his resignation of the treasurership, and tenders to him its best thanks for the many and great services which he has rendered to this organisation over a period of so many years."

Both Mr. Birrell and Mr. Massie were known to all of them by their work, and by the result of that work. They were known to them as men easy of approach, ready to give help and advice, and to many of them also they were known as warm and familiar friends. Mr. Birrell was a statesman—studious and earnest, and without any loss of geniality—a man broad of mind, and gifted with a sense of humour which was never so much needed as at present in order to render the position of President of the Board of Education tolerable. He was a brilliant speaker, who could hit hard, and whose attacks yet left no sting. Mr. Birrell had their earnest good wishes in his great work—a work which would earn for him the gratitude of the nation at large.

MR. B. S. JOHNSON (Chairman of the Bootle Division Liberal Association) seconded the resolution. He had but one qualification to do so, and that was he chanced to be a delegate from the constituency in which Mr. Birrell first saw the light of day. Since it became known that Mr. Birrell had been born in Wavertree no less than seven houses had claimed to be the scene of his nativity, and the constituency had begun to think no small beer of itself. It would, however, be churlish to claim for Bootle, or even Liverpool, a monopoly of admiration for Mr. Birrell—Liberals the kingdom over were united in acknowledging his great gifts and services. Mr. Massie's claim to recognition was scarcely less strong. The

fact that he had been instrumental in collecting £46,000 for the purposes of the Federation would redound to his honour, but that was perhaps the least of his services. His immense industry, his mastery of the art of political exposition, his steady friendship for his colleagues combined to make them all his debtors. In the difficult task in which Mr. Birrell was engaged he had their entire sympathy. They knew his liberal outlook, his generous temper, his love for the children whose guardian he had become. Honest and sagacious, tolerant and true-hearted, they might surely trust alike to his steadfastness to principle and his consideration for the rights of all. When the storm of criticism died away it would be found, he thought, that through Mr. Birrell the Government had done something to set at rest a controversy as inimical to true religion as it was disastrous to their civic progress. If, indeed, Mr. Birrell could accomplish that, it would be his most enduring achievement, for if the root of bitterness were removed, sectarian strife in its present sad and angry developments would cease, and then, and not till then, would the members of that Federation—separated in their theological beliefs, but linked in all human charities—be able to set their hearts and minds to the accomplishment of those more gracious and fruitful reforms upon which the future welfare and happiness of the people depended.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

### Report and Statement of Accounts.

MR. WILLIAM ANGUS (President of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Liberal Association) proposed:—

“That the Report and Statement of Accounts be received and adopted.”

He characterised the report as the most encouraging that the Federation had ever issued. It was satisfactory in every respect. Surveying the developments of the last twelve months, and referring in particular to the General Election, the speaker declared that the Liberal party had won all along the line. Every issue presented to the electorate contributed to their victory. They had an overwhelming advantage in the strength and justice of their cause, whilst they outmatched their opponents in enthusiasm, generalship, and organisation. It was a matter of great satisfaction that, of the twelve members of their committee who stood for Parliament, all were elected. Turning to the Education Bill, this country must have the same equality as prevailed in every other country where the English language was spoken.

MR. J. F. L. BRUNNER, M.P. (Leigh Division), (in the absence of Mr. Cherry, M.P.) seconded the resolution. Speaking as a former member of the committee, he said the National Liberal Federation focussed and concentrated the opinion of the party upon the measures which the country most desired. It assisted weak Liberal

associations and joined in the work of strong associations, and he claimed for the Federation that not a little of the successes of the last General Election was due to the exertions of its officers and committee.

MR. ALLAN BRIGHT (Liverpool) pointed out that there was no resolution on the agenda dealing with the conduct of the House of Lords in rejecting a measure which had been passed through the House of Commons without dissent. How long, he asked, were the people of England to endure the insufferable arrogance of the Peers? The Liberal party was the champion of liberty, and if it refused to accept the challenge of the Peers it would sink into insignificance and contempt in the eyes of all right-thinking men. If they only faced the situation they would beat the Peers as they had beaten them before. He most respectfully requested the committee to allow, before the meeting closed, an opportunity for the consideration of a resolution which would lay down once for all that they—as representing the people of this country, with an enormous majority at their backs both in the House of Commons and in the country—would not suffer themselves to be trampled upon by the arrogant pretensions of irresponsible position.

The PRESIDENT: The committee will certainly consider the suggestion which Mr. Bright has made.

The report and statement of accounts were unanimously adopted.

### The General Election and the New Government.

MR. BAMFORD SLACK (ex-M.P. for St. Albans) proposed:—

“That this Council, at its first meeting since the General Election, records its profound satisfaction that a long reign of Toryism is ended, and that the affairs of the country are in the hands of a Liberal Government, resting on the support of the greatest Parliamentary majority since the time of the great Reform Act of 1832. The Council expresses its loyal and heartfelt confidence in Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and his colleagues in the Ministry, and pledges itself to use every effort to maintain and increase the strength of Liberalism in the constituencies.”

The end had at last come. The night of Toryism was over, the day of Liberalism had dawned. The long reign of Toryism and Chamberlainism was ended in England almost concurrently with the ending of the reign of Toryism in Russia and in France. It was easy to sum up the policy of the late Government, but its results would last many a day. It had been characterised by reactionary legislation, doles to friends, class favouritism, and partisan patronage, whilst their appointments to the magisterial and even to the judicial bench had not always seemed in the best interests of the country. Their administration had been one of unparalleled national extravagance and careless incompetence. They had tampered with the vital principles of the Constitution, and had recently threatened our successful Free Trade policy. They had engaged in

avoidable wars, and the necessary evils—debt, taxation, unemployment, and discontent—had resulted. When Mr. Balfour chose the inconvenient month of December for his resignation, he found the country ready. The hour had come, and so had the man, and that man—Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman—was equal to the task. He had formed a Cabinet of strong, honest, capable statesmen who had applied themselves with vigour and determination to their difficult task, and had won the confidence of the country. The resolution rejoiced in the overwhelming and sweeping majority by which the Liberal party had been returned to power, and pledged the representative Liberals present to maintain the position which had been gained, and increase the strength of Liberalism throughout the country. They must not cease their efforts, but continuously strive. The Liberal party had always been the trustee of the cause of progress. The principles and policy of that party make for stability, comfort, and progress—aye, and for the righteousness—of the nation and of the Empire. The Government was pledged to these principles. Liberals in the constituencies had vigorously to expound and enforce them, and so support and maintain the leaders, in order to establish an era of just, prudent, wise, and sympathetic government.

DR. A. P. THOMAS (Liverpool) in seconding the resolution, said that the country had asked for new men and new measures and a new spirit. In the present House of Commons they had got all these. Now they found activity instead of torpor, progress instead of reaction, and everywhere a desire to do equal justice to all, instead of promoting the privileges of the few. The present Government had done more in the past few months in the way of meeting the demands of the shipping and other commercial people of Liverpool than the late Government had done during ten years. In foreign affairs it was just and fearless, while being conciliatory, seeking to bind all nations by ties of peace.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

### Free Trade.

LORD BRASSEY moved the following resolution:—

“That this Council expresses its great satisfaction at the determination of the country, as made evident at the General Election, to resist all attempts to deprive it of the incalculable advantage which has accrued to it from the adoption of Free Trade; and the Council pledges itself, whenever the need shall again arise, to repeat its resistance to Protection, whether in the form of a tax on food or of a general tariff, or disguised as retaliation, colonial preference, or tariff reform.”

Lord Brassey said: At the close of a long sitting, my words shall be few. They will come from my heart. I should not be here unless I greatly cared for the Liberal cause. I fought for it when I was young. I will not desert it, now that I am old. In 1861 I was the first candidate on the Liberal side for the borough of Birken-

head. I am glad that I had the privilege of speaking for Mr. Lever and Mr. Vivian on the eve of the last General Election. I turn to the resolution in support of which I have the honour to speak. It commemorates the victory lately gained for the cause of freedom of trade. Never was the influence of the Liberal party more needed. If we had been beaten, the consequences would have been fatal. Fiscal policy is not a subject which can be dealt with in a few crisp phrases. I have written a volume of 200 pages, of which some 10,000 copies have been circulated. It would be impossible to condense its contents into a short speech. We hear no more to-day of imperial unity by means of tariffs. It is seen that countries resolved to protect their home industries, and those seeking wider markets, have divergent interests. It is wiser to leave to both sides full liberty to do what they deem best for their respective interests. On this full liberty the self-governing Colonies insist. Speaking in Liverpool, in 1897, Sir Wilfrid Laurier appropriately quoted the lines of Rudyard Kipling: "Daughter am I in my mother's house; but mistress in my own." Imperial unity does not rest on tariffs. It depends on the racial bonds. They are light as silk, but strong as adamant. Turning to Retaliation, we are free to consult our own interests. It were idle to expect that by a more exclusive tariff we could compel France or Germany to admit our goods into their home markets, to the detriment of their own workers. Exports of manufactures to manufacturing countries must be limited in amount. It is good to know that our keenest rival is our best customer. The true policy in matters of trade is to improve the home demand by lightening the burdens of taxation; to put our industries into the best position for competition in the vast open markets of the world by admitting food and raw materials duty free; and to raise industrial efficiency by extending technical education. And now, as an elder statesman, let me ask the privilege of very briefly referring to one or two other topics. Chiefly, I desire to impress on this representative meeting the necessity that always exists within the ranks of the Liberal party for mutual compromise and concession between its many sections. After long years of exclusion we have for our party a splendid opportunity. It would be disastrous to break up before our work is done. The occasion calls for statesmanship on the part of the leaders and for loyalty on the part of the rank and file. Mr. Acland, whom we are so proud to see in the chair, has referred to the many beneficial and statesman-like measures which the Liberal party desire to carry through Parliament. This must be the work of years. Veterans must be content to bear a slender part. We look, as it were, to a land of promise, which we may not ourselves enter. We have our consolation—we may reflect that no man is indispensable. Succeeding generations have their appointed leaders. For the Liberal party they are designated for a long time to come. New talent is revealed in every debate—on the front bench and behind it. And there are the old Parliamentary hands—Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and

his colleagues. How high they were held in popular esteem the late election has shown. Never was the Liberal party in a position more commanding. It was, it must be, a power for good. I pledge myself, so long as life lasts, to stand loyal to the old cause and the old flag.

MR. ALFRED MOND, M.P. (Chester : Treasurer of the Free Trade Union), seconded the resolution. He said that Free-traders had beaten off their enemy's frontal attack, and now the enemy were trying to attain their object by devious side paths. Their latest dodge was to forget about colonial preference and food taxes, and to talk a lot about a tax on manufactured goods for revenue purposes only. This was the insidious poison they attempted to instil during the Dulwich election. In whatever disguise the policy of Protection might be raised in the future, he was sure that Liberals would oppose it with the same determination and vigour and with the same success as in the past.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

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## SECOND SESSION OF THE COUNCIL.

THURSDAY, MAY 24TH.

The second Session of the Council was held in the Hope Hall at 10.30 a.m. The Right Hon. A. H. D. Acland (President of the Federation) occupied the chair.

The PRESIDENT said the Executive Committee had considered the question of whether they should bring forward a resolution about the Lords, but thought they would be giving them rather too much attention if they did. The Lords would probably require "special treatment." It was probable that a special meeting of the delegates would be called to consider that problem, and he hoped the delegates would appreciate such "extended facilities."

### Education.

MR. GEORGE WHITE, M.P. (North-west Norfolk), moved the following resolution:—

"That this Council heartily supports the Education Bill as based upon the principles that in elementary education there shall be complete public management and control and no religious tests for teachers, and that no part of the cost of denominational teaching shall fall upon public funds.

"The Council, confident that the constituencies approve of the measure as giving effect to the principles they have already endorsed at the polls, and recognising that the Bill as it stands is framed in a spirit of generous consideration for the claims of the existing denominational schools, urges the Government to resist all attempts to whittle away principles which the country is resolved to see enforced, and on which alone can the foundation be laid for the future educational progress which the nation so urgently needs.

"Further, the Council earnestly hopes that opportunity will soon be found to apply the same principles to the important questions of secondary education and the training of teachers."

Mr. White referred to the militant attitude of the Church. "A Call to Arms," "Striking Manifesto by the Bishop of Manchester," and "Clergyman Anxious to Fight Mr. Birrell" were the newspaper headlines to which Liberals were getting accustomed. Church leaders seemed to be intoxicated with the sense of their own sanctity. But Liberals could comfort themselves with the thought that those who made the most noise were not always the most powerful. What was all the fuss about? It was not about the Bible; it was not even about the Catechism. It was really about the first clause of the Bill, which said that after a certain date a school would not be recognised as a public elementary school unless it was a school provided by the local authority. Opponents of the Bill dare not oppose this clause openly. The clergy did not realise, apparently, that their Waterloo was fought in January last; they had been

taken up so much with sacred or other things that they forgot their call to arms now was too late, and that the time had gone when they could make any effective protest against the will of the nation. Apart from the clergy, there were others who did not forget the Liberals' mandate. The *Times*, the *Standard*, and other Conservative papers had said that the abolition of a dual system of education was inevitable; and there were odd clergymen (he quoted statements) who realised that the election had been fought largely on the education question. On the other hand, members of Parliament were being overwhelmed with petitions against the Bill, and these petitions, as far as his own constituency was concerned, he found to be signed largely by women who were not householders. For a century the Church had exercised power unlawfully in education, and it was largely because this power was dealt with in the Bill that the Bill commanded the support of Liberals. It was said that the Bill stirred up religious strife, and that it broke the concordat entered into in 1870. That concordat was broken long since by those who now claimed its fulfilment. It might be true that Mr. Forster in his Bill of 1870 declared that it was to supplement and not supplant denominational teaching. But it was equally true that Mr. Forster said also: "The education of the people by the people's own officers, appointed by the people in their local assemblies and controlled by the people's representatives in Parliament, was the only foundation of a national system of education." Liberals were trying slowly to grope their way to such an ideal. One of the great charters of the Bill was that it at once closed the privilege which had existed in 8,000 rural schools, and if it did nothing else it was worth all the fighting that was going on. The management of these schools could not be trusted to those who hitherto had control of them. He looked upon the Bill as a charter for rural England. Although it might put the towns into many difficulties, the towns were able to fight their battles better than the villages. The Cowper-Temple clause ought to satisfy all true Protestants, but it was attacked from two quarters—by Anglicans and by the advocates of purely secular education. There were many Anglicans who said that the amount of religious instruction obtained under the Cowper-Temple clause was worse than no religion at all. It was something to have got from Mr. Balfour the admission that he would prefer the Cowper-Temple clause to nothing. Lord Hugh Cecil, on the other hand, had said that Board School instruction was very good religious instruction so far as it went, but there was the fundamental objection that it could not attach a child to a denomination. In the opinion of Liberals that was the best recommendation of Board School teaching. As to the contention of the advocates of secular education, Mr. White said he would admit that the secularists' solution was the logical one, but it was not the practical solution. If the Government had brought in a secular bill their backing would not have been anything like equal to the backing they now had. Another section of the Government's opponents

never ceased to argue that the present Bill would tear up trusts and lead to the spoliation of denominational schools. He would rather, especially in view of these hot contentions on the part of Churchmen, that the Minister of Education had dealt with the question of buildings on other lines, and had said to the clergy, "We do not need and won't have your schools." Such a proposal would have had the practical support of the whole Liberal party, and he believed it would in the end have been cheaper for the country. In many districts a school for 100 children could be built for £1,000, including the site. The money borrowed at sixty years would involve an outlay of £3 6s. 8d. per cent. for interest and principal, and the rent of such a school would be, say, £35 per annum. Would the Government be able to get a school rented from the existing trustees and the fabric maintained at considerable cost for less than £35 a year? There would, he hoped, be more said on this point in the House of Commons. It was known that Mr. Birrell was in full sympathy with the view outlined, and had told the Opposition that this building of new schools was an alternative to the Bill's proposals which must not be forgotten. In the past twenty-five years trustees had failed to carry out their trusts. Now the State came forward and took from the trustees' shoulders the secular portion of the trusts, giving certain facilities for the carrying on of religious instruction. This was not only just but generous, and the confiscation of the ratepayers' money occurred in the Bill rather than a confiscation of the rights of trustees. Much was heard about what was called the inalienable rights of parents. From a good many who uttered this it was a new cry. There had been at least 8,000 schools where such a right had never been admitted. Liberals denied the right of the parent to secure specific religious teaching at the expense of the nation. Care must be taken that the Bill was not mutilated against the popular will.

MR. ELLIS J. GRIFFITH, M.P. (Anglesey), in seconding the resolution, said that the matter must be dealt with historically to some extent in order to appreciate how the present position had been arrived at. After the election of 1900, Church people said they could not bear the heavy financial strain of maintaining their own schools. They came on their hands and knees—they did go on their knees sometimes—and said, "We are no longer able to pay £900,000 a year, and we come to the State to secure us and give us this money." What did the Church give up under the 1902 Act? They did not give up the appointment of teachers; they did not give up dogmatic teaching in any of their schools; they forgot all about the inalienable right of parents; and they gave nothing up except the control of the local authority. He contended that the Conservative party in 1902 had no mandate to deal with the question at all, and, having fraudulently—as he said—assumed authority to deal with it, they made a bargain which was an unconscionable bargain, an unfair bargain, and one which was to the disadvantage of the community

generally. He claimed, as was sometimes done in the Court of Chancery, to set that document aside, and he also claimed to look at the position not as it was last year, but as it was in 1901, before the Tory Government's Bill was passed. That was the true standard of comparison, especially when they remembered that the £900,000 which they subscribed was found not enough to keep the Church schools properly staffed as compared with the Board schools. It now appeared that £2,000,000 a year, and not £900,000, was required to keep the schools in proper repair, etc. The difference between the 1900 and the 1906 election was this—that in 1900 there was no education controversy before the country, whilst in 1906 there was a great education controversy. The meaning of the mandate given to the present Government was popular control and no tests. There were certain people who ignored the General Election. The clergy, no doubt, knew more about the general doctrine of election than they did about the doctrine of the General Election. Anyone who ignored the result and the meaning of the General Election lived in a fool's paradise, and there were signs that a great many of them had become acclimatised. The first clause of the Bill was the embodiment of the mandate given in the General Election. The first clause gave popular control, and if the Bill stood there it might mean also absolute freedom from all tests in the school, for everything else in the Bill after the first clause was a concession to those who fought them at the General Election. The Bill was admittedly a compromise. He was not, as a rule, enamoured of any kind of compromise, but there was one justification for a compromise, and that was that it was accepted by the other party. If it were not accepted, the only result was that a man compromised himself and nothing else. He did not believe in violence, and he trusted that his hearers would be able to free the discussion of cant, as they hoped to free their schools from the domination of Canterbury. Under the Bill there would not be a uniform class of school. There would be three kinds of schools. The old provided school became what he would call a "syllabus school," where nearly half the children of the country were being educated at the present time. The Bill did not touch this half-million in the least, and so far the Bill did no wrong to the denominationalists. The denominational schools, the non-provided schools, would be divided into two classes. First of all, there would be the mixed schools, where there would be dogmatic teaching on two days a week, not given by the teacher. The parson would have something to do in the early hours of the morning, and that was a religious test in which he believed. In addition to these facilities for dogmatic teaching, the children could, like the million children, avail themselves of the Cowper-Temple teaching in the school. There was thus dogmatic teaching in the schools of the Church of England, and under the four-fifths clause they could also obtain that "atmosphere" for which they contended. They also got rents for their buildings and repairs from the ratepayers of the country. He hoped that some scheme would

be forthcoming whereby the State would have its own schools. He did not think the real educationalists of the country would ever be satisfied until the State school belonged to the State. The State ought not to be the tenant of the Church, and he thought it would be cheaper financially, but whether it would be cheaper or not the principle was so important and dominated the situation to such an extent that they ought to be called upon to make sacrifices if necessary to remove this obstacle in the way of uniformity and consistency, and give to the parishes the village school, which should always be at the disposal of the ratepayers for all purposes of village life. He feared sometimes that generosity had somewhat run riot in the Bill, but he trusted that it contained the maximum of concession. Their message to the Government was, "Keep a firm grip on the Bill as it stands; no mutilation, no concession, and pass the Bill as it stands, as a generous and more than generous compromise in favour of those with whom we have fought." The Government must remember that it was better to offend their enemies than to offend their friends. It was because he believed that the Bill represented in the main the views of Nonconformists desiring anxiously and not too critically a solution of the question upon fair and reasonable lines that he supported the Bill.

LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY spoke in support of the resolution. He said that, in view of the way in which the Cowper-Temple clause was being abused, it was well to bear in mind that this clause was put of their own accord by the Conservative Government into the Act of 1902 for all secondary schools to be established by a public authority. Delegates might remind their opponents, when they spoke of the impossibility of giving general Christian teaching which was not denominational or Anglican teaching, that in the schemes for endowed schools which had been carried out ever since 1874, when the Conservative Government set aside the special commissioners and turned over the reform of endowed schools to the Charity Commissioners, where the school trusts were found to be definitely Church of England they put into the scheme that the teaching should be Church of England, and where they found that the trusts were open they put into the scheme that there should be instruction given in the Christian religion. This showed that the Conservative Government and their officials had for thirty and more years recognised that there is such a thing as general Christian teaching which is not identical with the teaching of the Church of England or of any other Church. Then there was the demand for what was called an "atmosphere." If any managers of schools claimed that they had a definite denominational atmosphere during the hours of secular teaching, they claimed that they had systematically violated the law ever since the Act of 1870. The object of the time-table conscience clause was to secure that there should be an absolute severance between the ecclesiastical or theological atmosphere of religious instruction and the general atmosphere and tone

of the school during the times when all the children were compelled to attend. As to the Roman Catholic schools, where this "atmosphere" was pleaded for most, it must be remembered that ever since the Free Education Act came into force these schools had been reckoned by the Board of Education as part of the general supply of the country. Places in these schools were offered freely in Lancashire and elsewhere to satisfy the demands of Protestant parents, and in answer to a demand for free education. It did not, therefore, lie within their right to keep up what was called the "religious atmosphere" during the hours of secular instruction. It would have been noticed how far the Conservative party had progressed towards recognising the injustice of any Church being established by the State if that Church was not one for which they cared. Mr. Balfour complained of the gross injustice of the Cowper-Temple clause, because, although good teaching was given under it, the clause established one form of religious teaching while not establishing all forms. He hoped they would keep extracts from the speeches now made on the Conservative side, for when they came to one of the great steps forward of the Liberal party—the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church—they would be able to use this choice collection to show the injustice of maintaining the religion of any one section, even if it be of the majority, at the expense of the whole nation. It was a mistake to suppose that in dealing with the non-provided schools they were dealing with the schools of the clergy. They were schools held in trust for public purposes—viz., the education of the people of the parish—and a great deal too much concern was being shown for what was called rights of property where there were actually only obligations of trusteeship. At the same time he agreed very much with Mr. Griffith that dual ownership was bad, and that it was especially important that the school, which should be the secular rallying point and place of union, education, and civilisation for the parish, should belong to the parish, and be at the disposal of the parishioners outside school hours as well as inside school hours. Undoubtedly an enormous number of these buildings were only fit for temporary use. In the past one of the great obstacles in the way of educational progress had been the disgraceful complicity of the Board of Education in sanctioning insanitary buildings that one would hardly put a pig into, much less a child. It was a remarkable fact that Voluntary schools which had been tolerated for years had, when transferred to the School Board, been immediately condemned. In Lancashire we should, he thought, have to struggle with the reluctance of the public authorities to do their duty. There had been in Lancashire connivance amounting to fraud in the way new floors had been laid and other repairs done for the Voluntary schools, which the law required the Voluntary schools to do for themselves. It would need a firm grip at the centre responsible to Parliament to see that the local authorities did their duty and did not patch up and tinker bad buildings.

MR. GEORGE ARMSTRONG (Darlington) said that he spoke as a believer in secular education and as a believer in Clause 4. He did not understand secular education as meaning the exclusion of the Bible from the schools. He contended that Clause 4 did not interfere with the main principles of the Bill. It did not interfere with the right of public control, because the option was given to local authorities as to whether they carried it out or not.

MR. MYLREA (East Manchester) said that he stood before them as a Liberal Catholic, and he stood there not in his own name but in the name of thousands of Catholics and protested against this resolution, because it was not even conciliatory enough to make the Catholics feel a bit more comfortable than they were.

THE REV. H. ENFIELD DOWSON (Gee Cross, Hyde) said that he had not forgotten what Mr. Chamberlain taught him up to 1886, but he had forgotten all he had taught him since. He remembered the education conflicts and compromises of the past and how they had suffered by them, and it was now time that the religious difficulty, which was a scandal to this country, was made a thing of the past. He was a devoted admirer of the present Government, and at the last election he took off his jacket and did what he could to return the Liberal member for the Hyde Division. He had thought they were going to have a thorough policy, but he was not altogether satisfied that the fourth clause of this Bill carried out one of the planks of the Liberal platform—namely, the abolition of tests for teachers. He asked the Government to carefully consider that clause. He was a man of peace and not a man of war, but he did plead with this great Government, in which he had the utmost confidence, to fight this battle of education to the finish. Let them have no compromise, but let them carry out the principles of the Bill for the benefit of unborn generations of children.

MR. COLLEY (Dudley) said he was a passive resister whose goods had been sold five times, and would, he supposed, be sold again, although a Liberal Government was in office. He urged them "to go for the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill."

The resolution was passed, with three dissentients.

### **The First Session of the New Parliament.**

SIR JOHN BRUNNER, BART., M.P. (Northwich), proposed the following resolution:—

"That this Council warmly approves of the programme of legislation which, in addition to the Education Bill, is outlined in the King's Speech, containing as it does such measures as those dealing with trade disputes, workmen's compensation, unemployment, the equalisation of rates in London, merchant shipping, the abolition of the property qualification for county justices, and the abolition of plural voting. The Council confidently trusts the Government and the Liberal majority in the House of Commons

to see that these Bills are placed upon the Statute Book this Session, and looks forward in future Sessions to measures which shall carry out the other social and political reforms to which the Liberal party stands pledged. The Council records its satisfaction with the action of the Government in regard to Chinese labour and other South African problems, approves its policy as regards labour in the great administrative departments of the State, and cordially endorses the declarations made by the House of Commons with regard to the taxation of land values, old-age pensions, the feeding of school children, the control of the liquor traffic, and the payment of members and of official election expenses."

He remarked that the legislative programme of the Government promised them something of fairplay between class and class; something in accordance with their cordial wish for the prosperity of trade; something to satisfy their longing for the health and strength of their little ones; something to satisfy their desire for the spread of sobriety; and he might add—he had in his mind a Bill for the control of the liquor traffic—something to satisfy their desire as good citizens for decency and good order in the streets; and something satisfying to their hatred of slavery. He was afraid that the payment of members would oust him; but he gave his hearty approval to the proposal to widen the choice of men as Parliamentary representatives, so that the privilege of wealth should cease, and character and ability should be the only qualification. He thoroughly trusted working men not to return to Parliament men who wanted to get there simply for the sake of the pay. Let them do their part to urge the majority in Parliament to back up the Government in their endeavour to pass the measures they had promised.

MR. HENRY VIVIAN, M.P. (Birkenhead), in seconding, said the resolution covered a very wide field, and pointed out to them that the Government had already indicated their desire, at any rate, to fulfil the pledges made at the General Election. The Workmen's Compensation Bill was a most important measure. As years rolled on, it was the problems of industry which occupied Parliament more than the problems of war, and one of the most important was the compensation to the wounded soldiers of industry. Having expressed approval of the inclusion in the Bill of seamen and others, the speaker defended the demand of trade unionists in regard to the Trade Disputes Bill. They claimed that in the rough-and-tumble scrimmage of the industrial world the State should say that as far as possible the law should not hamper the freedom of one side. Disregarding all technical questions of law, trade unionists said that the workman should be free to fight out the battle with his employer without all the costly litigation and waste which would result from any attempt to make him or his organisation suable for damages inflicted on industry. The conditions of industry were such that, at the close of a struggle, workmen could not get the information and evidence that would enable them to bring an employers' association to book for damages to tens of thousands of men. Was it possible to make a law that would get at employers who met in secret to



arrange their campaign and secure the sinews of war? Was it equity to make the parties equal on paper while in practice only one party would be injured? He knew of no instance where it would have been possible for a workmen's organisation to get hold of a masters' organisation, which had no funds which could be reached. Proceeding, he said that he hoped the Liberal party were going to return to their past in regard to the question of international peace and reduction of expenditure upon armaments. We had added £40,000,000 a year to expenditure on those machines, representing a credit of a thousand millions of the capital of the country. It was England's duty not to follow; our position was so supreme in this matter that it was our duty to lead Europe. He hoped they would go away from that meeting to do their level best in their constituencies to create that "atmosphere" and public opinion that would support the Government throughout their years of struggle against vested interests.

MR. GEORGE GREEN (Chairman of the General Council of the Scottish Liberal Association) supported the resolution, remarking that in Scotland they intended to keep the Liberal flag flying to the fullest possible extent.

MISS LINDSAY (South Manchester) pointed out that there was no resolution on the agenda dealing with the franchise for women. The Prime Minister had counselled patience. She had been waiting patiently for twenty-six years, and she would continue to wait patiently and constitutionally until a Bill for the enfranchisement of woman was submitted to the House of Commons. The speaker added that she deprecated a policy of insults.

The PRESIDENT observed that the removal of women's disabilities was one of those social reforms to which they were pledged by their resolutions.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

### Votes of Thanks.

MR. A. H. SCOTT, M.P. (Ashton-under-Lyne), moved:—

"That the best thanks of this Council be tendered to the President of the Liverpool Liberal Federal Council and his colleagues, and to the officers and members of the Reception Committee; also to Mr. A. G. Jeans, Chairman of the Liverpool Reform Club; Mr. Walter J. Bellis, Chairman of the Liverpool Junior Reform Club; and the committees of both those clubs, and to the managers of the White Star and Cunard lines, to Messrs. Lever Brothers, to the directors of the Electric Railway, and to all others who, by the excellence of their local arrangements and by their cordial welcome and generous hospitality, have contributed so much to the pleasure of the delegates, and to the success of the visit of the National Liberal Federation to Liverpool."

MR. GEORGE LEVESON-GOWER (member of the Executive Committee), seconded, and the resolution was carried with enthusiasm.

MR. EDWARD EVANS having acknowledged the compliment, the meeting terminated.

## MEETING IN SUN HALL.

MAY 24TH, 1906.

On Thursday evening a mass meeting was held in the Sun Hall. The building was crowded with an audience of over 5,000 persons, and the proceedings were throughout enthusiastic. The chair was taken by Mr. Edward Evans, J.P. (President of the Liverpool Liberal Federal Council).

The CHAIRMAN said their first feeling was naturally one of regret at the absence of one who had done perhaps more than any other to achieve the victory at the last election, and he was sure that from that vast gathering would go a feeling of sympathy for their revered leader, and a hope that the anxiety under which he was labouring would soon be removed. This meeting was history repeating itself. Thirteen years ago he presided over a similar meeting after the General Election of 1892, and was able to congratulate the delegates on victory won, and recommended a policy of "thorough" to the Government. They then paid tribute to the victory obtained under the greatest leader the party ever had. Great as Mr. Gladstone was, in their present leader they had found one most worthy to follow him. Although it was said comparisons were odious, they would notice one similarity between the two men, and that was the deep and sincere affection, the personal affection, for Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman by his followers. Again, in their present leader they recognised his enormous tenacity to principle, and his unfailing courtesy to opponent as well as friend. He had formed the strongest Cabinet that any Minister ever had, and with him as their leader and such men of the type of Mr. Lloyd-George as members of the Government, was there any necessity to ask them to be thorough? Referring to the Education Bill, he said that, to his mind, Clause I. was the main principle in the whole Bill, and he was quite certain that if anybody could show Mr. Lloyd-George or Mr. Birrell that there was any better method of settling this question, after Clause I. was passed, they would carefully consider it as long as it was not contrary to the principle of Clause I. But this was not the only question that would have to be dealt with. One of the most important was that they should embark upon an era of peace—not peace as it would affect themselves at home alone, but which would set the right example to other countries. Let them, the greatest country in the world, set the right example in this respect, and he was certain that many of the European Powers would follow suit. As far as their own city was concerned they had done something. It had always been a mystery to him why Liver-

pool should return anyone who in any shape or form showed himself in favour of interfering with the distributing trade of this country. He could only put it down to ignorance on the part of the rank and file, and he hoped they would assist those they had placed in power to combat this ignorance and apathy.

### SPEECH BY MR. LLOYD-GEORGE.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE, M.P., *who was received with much enthusiasm*, said:—Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen,—By the kindness of your welcome I take note of the fact that you have already extended to me the indulgence which I stand sadly in need of to-night. If you sympathise with me half as much as I sympathise with you in your disappointment we shall get on.

### Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.

I know you came here to express your appreciation of the services of the man alluded to by the Chairman in his speech—the man who picked up the flag of progress when it was drooping; who stuck to it through a storm of abuse, misrepresentation, and obloquy, who saved it many a time from falling into the hands of the enemy, and who carried it through discouragement, defeat, disaster, depression, but never through dishonour. I come from a House of Commons where his influence is paramount, where his consistency, his ability, and his good-humoured courage have won the affection of the House in a way I have not seen since the good days of Gladstone. I have been in other Parliaments which I am certain I shall not forget soon, and which I think the country will not forget soon—in those Parliaments he used to be treated with ill-mannered disdain, but in the hour of victory, as in the days of defeat, he has shown how a British gentleman can behave. Our sympathy goes out to him in the trouble which has prevented his presence here to-day, and I am certain it is the fervent hope of every member of this great gathering that the brave comrade of his life, who has helped him to greatness, will soon be restored to health and to strength.

### Liverpool Liberal Members of Parliament.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman is at the head of the greatest majority of modern times. It is a majority to which you have contributed in this district, and you sent notable members there. There is my friend Major Seely, Mr. Cherry, and Mr. Henry Vivian, and I am glad to say, Mr. Austin Taylor. I know a

Liberal when I meet him, and I know the other sort, too. The first time I met Mr. Austin Taylor and had a chat with him, I said to him: "You are on the wrong side of the House," and he replied, "Well, I am not sure that you are not right." Like a wise man he took two or three years to reflect over it. But he has come to the right decision at last. Well, now, I must not forget that brilliant Irishman, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, who is not merely a great Nationalist, but is also one of the best democrats that ever sat for any great city. So you have done something, at any rate, to help forward the cause of progress in this great city of Liverpool. You have made a beginning.

### **A Government that Means Business.**

Well, you are helping, at any rate, a Government which modesty forbids me to say much about; but I will tell you this—it is a Government that means business. We have not made a bad start. We have introduced a few little bills, and we are well on the way with them. We have got the Workmen's Compensation Bill; we have the Trade Disputes Bill; and we have the Education Bill—a little uncontroversial measure which the House of Commons is considering at the present moment. Then there is the Plural Voting Bill.

(At this point a woman in one of the galleries over the platform interrupted with a remark about women's suffrage, and at the same time she attempted to wave a banner. This was promptly wrested from her, and as she persisted in obstructing the meeting, she was gently, but firmly, escorted out of the building.)

### **Women's Suffrage.**

I frankly confess to you I had rather that lady had not been turned out. Of course, it is a great nuisance, and personally, as a friend of women's suffrage—as one who voted for it, who went down to the House of Commons the other night to vote for it, and who will vote for it again, whatever silly women may do to destroy it—I think it is a mistake that they should act as they do; but they are judges of their own course. In due season let me say one word to these ladies, who are very earnest advocates of a very great cause. Let me say one word to them. I had a letter put in my hands before I came on the platform from as sincere and distinguished an advocate of women's suffrage as anyone in this hall, and I had meant to say a word about it; but really they must wait until their turn comes. By means of scenes of this character, they render it absolutely

impossible for those who are really prepared to assist them to do so, and I earnestly appeal to them, as a real sympathiser with them, not at any rate to upset meetings which are addressed by their best friends. For instance, Sir Edward Grey is one of the best women suffragists there is, and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman is from the bottom of his heart a believer in the cause, and, as a matter of fact, the only member of the Cabinet who has not been disturbed by these ladies is the one man who is the strongest against women's suffrage.

### The Government and Commissions.

Well, now, let us get along. I was just enumerating the bills that had already been introduced, and I gave you a list of a few of them. There are two ewe lambs of my own amongst the list. There is the Merchant Shipping Bill, which makes it incumbent upon foreigners who seek the hospitality of our shores to conform with the laws which we have passed for the purpose of protecting human life. Then we have one or two inquiries on hand. I know it is the custom on the other side to jeer at the fact that we have appointed a number of commissions. Well, it depends upon the object of appointing them, and it depends upon when you appoint them. The method of the late Government was to blunder first and inquire afterwards. They appointed two or three or four commissions after the South African war, whereas a few pertinent inquiries before might have avoided the whole thing, and it depends upon whether you appoint a commission to put off or to deal with it. I know of a Government that appointed a commission to inquire into local taxation. It inquired for years. The Government came in a second time, and at last, for very shame, they had to report, but nothing was ever done. The same Government undertook to deal with abuses in the Church, but was that for action or delay? (A VOICE: *Delay.*) Not the faintest doubt about it. But with our Government, when questions come to be dealt with, when their turn comes, these questions which are being investigated now will be dealt with, and the facts are being collected so as to enable the Government to take action on the right and the wisest lines.

### "Be Not Afraid."

At the head of affairs we have a man of real courage, and you know when you come to deal with great questions there is a set of people who will say to you, "You must not frighten," and they always talk as if the British people were a timid race—nervous and

anxious. As a matter of fact, the people who dwell in these islands are a very enterprising people. They have won their Empire and built up their commerce by daring. It is by that they have even got their religion. It is by daring that they have got the measure of freedom they have got under the Constitution. They have dared much for liberty; they are prepared to dare even more to extend its frontiers. You are not dealing with a timid people easily frightened, and the word of the country to the Government, in my judgment, is this: "Be not afraid." You know, as you proceed, you may shed a few stragglers, never very robust. I read in the paper to-day that a bishop has left the Liberal party. I never knew that that bishop was in the Liberal party. During all these years he has concealed his Liberalism under a bushel so that no one has seen it, and the first announcement of his Liberalism is the announcement of his departure. We have had reactionary measures galore introduced into the House of Lords. I never heard of this great Liberal bishop getting up to contest them. We have no need of Liberals of that sort in the House of Lords; we know they will all leave the Liberal party whenever any measure is brought forward to deal with any of the wrongs from which the people suffer. No, let us go on.

### The Great "Interests."

But although there is nothing to be frightened at, there is a good deal to call forth the mettle of the people. We have got to deal with very powerful interests, federated interests, syndicated interests. After all, you must recollect that for every man who suffers a wrong there is another man to whom it means a privilege, and the man who fights for the privilege by which he benefits fights as tenaciously as the man who fights to remove the wrong. You have got great interests—the landed interest, the Established Church, and the brewing interest. There is no city in the Empire which knows better than Liverpool what the power of the brewing interest is. I am very proud to see on this platform to-night one who has dealt the most staggering blow the brewing interest ever sustained in Liverpool—Sir Edward Russell. But all these interests will not be easily overcome. They have got the Press; they have got wealth; they have got Society with a big "S"; they have got the tradition of unbroken power all behind them; and they have got the House of Lords. (*Laughter, and a voice: "The Daily Mail."*) That is their official organ, and I cannot say much for the music that it gives.

### The House of Lords.

Well, now when the House of Lords is mentioned, I am glad to see the National Liberal Federation is beginning to realise that that is part of the work they have got to do as a Liberal Government. It is time to think about it again. It has been giving us a reminder of late of the mischief in it. It threw out a Bill carried unanimously in the House of Commons—not a dissentient voice against it, but it goes up to the House of Lords and it is thrown out by four to one. That is simply a sort of warning. The House of Lords wanted to do what it called asserting itself. I am very much obliged to them. There is some use in having a warning. It gives you time to look round, and it is time for us to scrutinise calmly the claims of the Lords to override the will of the people. I have always felt it was a great standing menace to progress. And I never felt that so much as since I have taken my share as a responsible Minister. There it is—a sort of skeleton at the Cabinet table. You have always to think how it is going to do, as if really it mattered a scrap. It is not so much that it will reject great measures—they hardly dare do that. It does worse. Great measures which the great mass of the people have been thoroughly roused about they dare not reject, but there are other measures which a section of the community demand, and that are not detrimental to the rest of the community, and these they can reject with impunity. Aye, until the time comes. Still worse, they can mutilate, they can disfigure, they can cut a thing out here and another there, and although you can get a mass of six or seven millions of electors to think collectively about great principles and come to a decision upon them, you cannot get them to come to a decision on details in working out those principles. That is where the mischief of this House comes in.

### What the House of Commons is.

Well, now, let us examine their claims. What is the House of Commons? The House of Commons represents forty-one millions of people. There is not a man who tills the soil; there is not a man who works in a factory; there is not a man who goes to an office in this city; there is not a man who goes down into the depths of the earth to bring up its treasures for the benefit of mankind; there is not a man who sails the ocean from British ports; there is not a man who gives brain, muscle, time, energy, thought to the industries that make up the wealth, the strength, the prosperity, the might of this land, who has not a voice and a vote in sending

a man to the House of Commons. The House of Commons represents the industry of the country. What does the House of Lords represent? It represents the idleness of the country. Who is it that make up the House of Commons? I know it is customary rather to gibe at them. Do not you forget that a man getting into the House of Commons has to stand one of the most severe ordeals that any man can go through. Take the Labour representatives. They are the picked men of their class. There is hardly a great manufacture in the realm that is not represented in the House of Commons. Take shipping, cotton, coal—take all the great professions—it is a House which is in itself representative of every class of industry, men who have gone through the work themselves, and know it. That is the House of Commons. I am sitting on a Bill in Grand Committee. There is a sailor who has been working before the mast; there is a fireman who has been working in the stokehold. There are other workmen, working themselves in the mill or in the coal mine. There, cheek by jowl with your sailor, is the biggest individual owner of ships in the whole of the world. There are your great shippers, men interested on both sides, and beside them you have got representatives of the professions and men in other trades who sit as a jury and decide between them. That is the House of Commons.

### What the House of Lords is.

What about the House of Lords? There is not a workman there. Why should not my friend Mr. Vivian be Lord Birkenhead? Why should not I be Lord Carnarvon? The gentleman who is called by that name has never been inside the town that I know of. Nobody knows anything about him, and he goes there to talk in the name of Carnarvon. Not a workman in the House of Lords; not a Nonconformist there. Four-fifths of the people of this country absolutely unrepresented in that House. Well, now, I would not mind if it were an impartial tribunal, even if all besides were eliminated. You might then say, "Here is, at any rate, a judicial body," but even of that I am beginning to doubt the value. If it were judicial I would not mind, but would you say the bishops are impartial between themselves and the Nonconformists? They represent vested interest; they represent privileges; they represent monopolies which are in issue, which are in controversy, which are part of the dispute. They themselves are on the pleadings, and they themselves are the judges. Well, now, I would not mind even that if they were men of superior intelligence. I can understand a man of great intellect being able to take a detached view of his own interest even, but it must be an intellect so colossal that it is not very common. But what are they? Now, there are men of great intelligence amongst them, but they have mostly gone up from the House of Commons. There is Lord Loreburn, there is the late Lord Chancellor, there is Lord Lansdowne, there is Lord James and there



is one very well known to my countrymen—Lord Rendell, and I need hardly tell you there is Lord Brassey; and there are a few hereditary peers who are also men of great intelligence. There is one man whom I consider to be a man of supreme genius, and that is Lord Rosebery. Then there is Lord Lansdowne, and there is the Duke of Devonshire, but he got his intelligence trained in the House of Commons. But these men all put together would not make a quorum in the House of Lords. What about the rest? I don't want to say a disparaging word about them, and therefore I pay them a great compliment by saying that they are as good men, probably, as you would pick at random—say the first 450 men you picked in Bond-street to-morrow morning—men of average intelligence; some of them, perhaps, men of great gifts—with this difference: that the men you would pick at random in the street would be men of affairs, whose intelligence had been trained, and whose brains had been sharpened by coming into contact with the actual affairs of life, and by having to earn their livelihood. They would be men who would know something about every branch of the art of living. But there is only one branch of the art of living that a peer is forced to attend to, and that is the expenditure part. This is really the state of things. They are not men who are there because of any special gifts, but purely from the accident of their birth.

### **The House of Lords as a Court of Appeal from the Decisions of the Country.**

Well, they sit in judgment as a court of appeal upon the representatives of 41,000,000 of people. They arrogate to themselves the right of saying about this Bill, "We will allow it," about the next Bill "We will allow it with such modifications and restrictions as we in our superior wisdom shall think fit to impose," and about the third Bill they say, "We cannot think of letting it go through." I say this is an intolerable piece of arrogance, and no Liberal Government can possibly sit under it if the Lords put forward such claims as that. There is only one more word I would say about them. If you were sitting down to frame a Constitution for this country, there is no one—that is, no responsible person—who would ever dream of suggesting such an arrangement as the House of Lords. There is not a single Conservative statesman in the land—not even Mr. Chamberlain—would think of suggesting it. Under those circumstances I don't think it is too early for us to begin to consider carefully and calmly—before the hour of anger comes, before the hour of real indignation comes—what claim an assembly of this sort has to set itself up as a court of appeal in the decisions arrived at by the people of this country.

### **The Education Bill.**

Well, now, there is a Bill which will go to the Lords by and by, and that is why I am talking about it now. It is a little Bill intro-

duced by my colleague Mr. Birrell, and is called the Education Bill. And with your indulgence I should like to say a few words about it. It is a difficult problem. The Government did not introduce the Bill without considering it very carefully. I don't believe any Cabinet ever considered a Bill with greater care than the present Government considered every item before they introduced it. I do not say it is perfect—nothing human is. You are dealing with one of the most intricate, delicate problems that can ever come before any Government for settlement. You are dealing with things that affect a man's conscience, and Governments should walk warily when they come to the domain of conscience. You have got to find a path through a tangle of creeds. We have thought this was the best Bill, not because it was purely a Nonconformist Bill; not because it was a Bill that purely appealed to supporters of the Government. It is because we considered all the difficulties, we considered everything that could possibly arise, and we brought in a Bill which we thought met the just demands of the case. It has created a great outcry—that was to be expected. You have only got to think for a moment of the changes effected by the Bill, and you will realise that it was unnatural not to expect that there would be at first a great protest against it from those who were concerned.

### The Bill of the Church Schools.

What was the position of things? You had a great, powerful, and rich Church in the land that had about 13,000 State schools under its sole control—schools maintained out of public funds. You had 60,000 teacherships practically in the appointment of that Church. Thirteen thousand or 14,000 of those teachers had, by trust deeds, to be members of the Communion of that Church. The rest were appointed by managers who had a statutory majority, and therefore could appoint anyone they chose. There were £6,000,000 or £7,000,000 of public money voted by Parliament and by the ratepayers to maintain these schools, to pay teachers appointed by this Church. You had 12,000 or 13,000 school buildings which are practically mission-rooms of that Church. On Sundays they were used for Sunday-schools; they were class-rooms belonging to the Church. All the lay work of the Church was done in those buildings, and yet the community paid for the papering, cleaning, adorning, and repairing of these mission-rooms of this powerful and rich denomination. You had six or seven thousand parishes where the only school was a school managed in this way by the ministers of this Church; managed by the community—where all the power, all the prestige that belongs to the management of the most important communal institutions vested in this Church. At one stroke all these special privileges are removed, and henceforth every school maintained by the State shall be managed by the people who maintain it. Henceforth no man when he comes to be applicant for teaching in any public school shall be asked what his views are about the great mysteries of life and death; henceforth

all creeds, all sects, no creeds, no sects, shall be on a perfectly equal footing in the eyes of the law.

### The Protest of the Church.

Of course, you cannot expect the men who had this power, who had this immense patronage, you cannot expect them to let the thing go without any protest and without any outcry. I think it is a most natural protest on their part. But I will tell you what I object to. I don't object to their protest. Every lamb bleats when it is shorn, and if the wool is not its own, but is glued on by Acts of Parliament, then the process of separation is all the more painful. I don't object to the protest. It is only natural they should be resentful. Every man whose privileges are being attacked, although they are privileges unfair and unjust to others, has always in the history of the world made a protest, and raised demonstrations. They did it in Ephesus. There was a great demonstration in the Albert Hall there, I believe. But I will tell you what I object to. I object to its being done in the name of religion. I do not mind them saying, "We feel very sore that you should take away from us the privileges which we from time immemorial have enjoyed." "Have I not always appointed the teacher in this village?" the manager will say. "Have I not always given my time to the school? Why should you take it away from me and give it to this County Council, who represent the rate-payers?" I say I can quite understand that attitude of mind. But I object to their saying that religion is going to suffer because, forsooth, you are going to substitute the Sermon on the Mount for the Catechism. That is an offensive attack on a Book which is sacred to the majority of us. I do not see where the injustice comes in to the Church. Is it an injustice to the Church to say, "Henceforth every Churchman who applies for a post shall have his claims considered on their merits"? Is it an injustice to a man to order that he will be treated on his merits? If it is, then I do not think much of his merits. Is it an injustice to the Church to say, "If we take your property"—and I hope the less they take of it the better—a much finer thing would be to build a beautiful, clean, well-ventilated, well-lighted little school in every village in the land for the little children—but is it an injustice if you pay for a thing? Is it an injustice to say you will treat all religions alike?

### Mr. Chamberlain's Scheme.

I acknowledge the difficulty. There are several solutions suggested, and, of course, Mr. Chamberlain has no end of them. Last week he was a Secularist; yesterday he was a High Churchman, with a great scheme. He was a believer in religious instruction, but nobody was to give it; there was nobody obliged to give it, nobody obliged to pay for it if it were given, and nobody responsible to see that it was given. And yet it was compulsory. That is, the child was compelled to come

there to receive what nobody was prepared to give. That was the first proposition. Not only that, the teacher was to give it, if anybody asked him. Every sect was to have its own dogmas taught by the teacher. That was rather confusing. I have known schools where there are only two or three teachers, and I wonder how it would work out there. They would have to divide. One teacher would be a High Churchman on Monday; on Tuesday he would take a Primitive Methodist class; on Wednesday he would be a Quaker; on Thursday he would take the Roman Catholic class, and prove to demonstration that he and the pupils he had taught on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday were schismatics and heretics. On Friday he would find repose in the Salvation Army class. Now, my one objection is a practical one. Not even Mr. Chamberlain could change his politics as rapidly as that. Well, now, it is the solution that comes from Birmingham. It is the latest Birmingham policy. I am not sure whether the Bishop of Birmingham has anything to do with it, because I observe that Mr. Chamberlain is a sort of a lay brother in the cause; but, really, this is a sample of the sort of alternatives. The Chairman made a perfectly pertinent demand at the end of his speech. He said, "Here is the scheme. It has been considered carefully from every point of view. Here is the scheme. If you think it does not do, where is your alternative?" "Quite right," says Mr. Chamberlain, and up he comes—a secular scheme last week, or an extreme ritualistic one to-day. To-morrow you never know what his scheme will be. But this is a sample of the difficulties you have got when you face the practical solution of the problem.

### The Difficulties of the Secular Solution.

Well, now, I should have liked to have said a word about Clause 4, but I am not so sure I am going to carry you with me. Well, listen to me, whether you agree with me or not (*Knock it out*). Well, stop a minute. Don't knock it out until you know what you are doing when you knock that out. If you had a perfectly secular scheme of education (*cries of dissent*)—well, you see the difficulty at once. If you had a perfect system of secular instruction, such as they have in France, it might be easy. But when I talk to my secular friends I see they realise the difficulty as much as do the Government. I was talking to a zealous secularist this morning—in fact, he moved the secular amendment in the House of Commons—a very able, honest, and fearless man—Mr. Maddison—and I tried to elicit his views. He wanted moral instruction in the schools. After all, you must teach not merely geography, not merely the boundaries of land and sea, not merely the frontiers of Empire—you must also show them the boundaries of right and wrong, and the frontiers that divide good from evil. That is part of the business of the State. You must remember this—the school is becoming more and more woven in the life of the citizen. I won't say the home is getting less and less—I hope not—but the school is becom-

ing more and more an ingredient, an element, in the character of the State. Think of it! Five hours a day, five days a week, seven or eight years of its life, a little child sits under the vigilant, the trained, and the impartial eye of a teacher, who knows him, knows his defects of will and of temperament—all that goes to make character. The teacher sees it, corrects it, amends it, and strengthens him where he is weak. You must remember that is what is making this country. It is in the making now in these schools, and the teacher is a man who fashions the destinies of Britain. How many parents can say that they have got their children five hours a day for years constantly within their supervision? Now, I put this to my secularist friend: When you come to teach the child of right and wrong, are you going to exclude the one which is the highest standard known to Britain of good conduct with life and to death? And my secularist friend said "No; I would not exclude it." Where are you? You then have introduced the Bible into the schools.

#### Clause 4.

Don't forget there are two considerable sections of the community who honestly take a different attitude towards the Bible to what you and I do. Let us recognise it. You may think it wrong, you might think it monstrous, intolerant. No man has a right to sit in judgment on his neighbour's conscience. Take the Jew. The most important part of our Scriptures he regards as a reflection upon his creed, a reflection upon his race, and he holds to his views with that wonderful racial tenacity which is unparalleled in the history of nationalities, and which I marvel at as a man belonging to a little nation myself—I am filled with admiration of it, and I say: Are you going to outrage the two deepest sentiments of the human heart by imposing upon a community of that kind anything which is an outrage upon their conscience? You must, at any rate, meet them if you are going to be fair to conscience. Now, let me give you another. Take our Catholic fellow-citizens. Their attitude towards the Book is not ours. I was very much impressed by the speech delivered by Mr. T. P. O'Connor, and what he read from the Catholics of Preston, on their attitude towards the Bible and private judgment. It is not ours. I am not going into the question now, but there it is, and if any Anglican says his attitude towards the Bible is the attitude of the Catholic, or the attitude of the Jew, he is also entitled to his private judgment, but he has no right to be in the Protestant Church. His place ought to be outside. What do we say in these cases? The only thing Clause 4 says is this—the Bill provides that local authorities may supply Bible teaching in the schools of the land, so long as you don't teach the dogmas that divide one sect from another. But that is no use to the Jew or to the Catholic. He cannot accept it. It is an offence to his conscience, and you cannot argue with him. He would not be a Catholic if you could convince him. You must accept that fact. And what do we say?

We say: "Very well, if the vast majority of the parents in any particular school built by these denominations recognise that they cannot accept this common Bible teaching, it is idle to enforce it upon them." And, therefore, we will give them the facility to provide themselves, at their own expense, outside the hours of secular teaching, the religious teaching that will have the greatest effect upon the children who attend that school.

### What Would Happen if Clause 4 were "Knocked Out."

I tell you frankly, I was not one of those who cared much for Clause 4, but I am a convert, and I own it. I think it is a moderate, reasonable attempt to meet one of the greatest difficulties we could encounter. Let me ask you to reflect for a moment what may befall if it is not accepted, and I ask my Nonconformist friends specially whether they are prepared to contemplate it? The Catholic is a man of conviction—(A VOICE: *Superstition*). Well, that as a Protestant may be your view, and it may be mine; but I say again, you have no right to dictate to another man's conscience. Let me put this to you. What will happen? He has no fear of the consequences. His creed and his faith are first to him. He makes great sacrifices, and it is a matter of wonder to see in a little town like Carnarvon the sacrifices made by a small community of Catholics to keep their little school together. They are not doing it for proselytising purposes. I have never heard them attempt to proselytise a single Nonconformist in the town. They simply do it to keep a shrine for the men and women of their own faith and their children. If you say that the schools must be closed the natural thing that happens will be they will try and keep a little school going here and there, and where they cannot have one they simply won't send their children to school. Why, it is no use going to a Catholic parent and saying, "You must send your child to school. We will teach him to read and write, and make a man of him." There would be no use in doing that if he thinks that driving his child to school under these conditions is to drive him to endless doom. You cannot argue with him. It is a horror which is present to his mind. You can conjure it away; you may think it superstition, but it is there, and are you going to start to imprison, are you going to start sending to gaol Catholic parents who will not send their children to school? (*No.*) Very well, I know you are not; therefore, let us frankly say we will meet the case in a courageous manner. I am sorry to keep you all this time, but I wanted to say that about this clause

### Simple Bible Teaching.

As for the rest, I wish only to sum up what we propose doing—as for the rest, we say that for all people who want religious teaching in the schools you can provide what is known as simple Bible teaching, and I still adhere to the word in spite of the irresponsible chatter of anybody. You can teach it in the

schools. Aye, if you ask extreme sectarians they will always tell you that the things wherein they differ from others are the fundamental doctrines of their faith. They will always tell you that. These are the things they defend, these are the things that are attacked, and the man who defends a post always exaggerates its importance in the general line of battle. But, after all, all the great Christian virtues are undenominational, and the greatest virtue of all is certainly undenominational—I mean charity. These things you can teach in the schools. Here is a catechism that was put into my hands to-day from one of our Colonies—a catechism in which they all agree (except the Catholics, whose attitude towards the Bible is entirely different)—a common syllabus of teaching for the children of Jamaica. I find the first man who signs it is the Archbishop of the West Indies, and you have the leading men of the denominations there frankly recognising the differences that divide them. But they say there is a sufficient common body of doctrine and faith which they can teach to the children in all schools without any distinction. Ah! after all, I am not here to criticise catechisms of denominations, but they have a way of putting in the background the things which the Founder of our faith put in the foreground. I was amazed, going through them, to find that that sublime code of Christian morals—the Sermon on the Mount—is not in these catechisms at all, for the reason given by Lord Robert Cecil, who said it was worthless for the purpose of teaching religion. He said so in the House of Commons. There is nothing in them that would induce you to believe that the advent of the Christian era was heralded by a proclamation of peace on earth and goodwill to men.

### What is Wanted in the Schools.

What we want taught in the schools is something that will raise the people out of that quicksand of wrong from which for centuries they have been struggling in vain to extricate themselves. Denominationalism has had its chance. It has taught our rulers, our statesmen—the men who governed the land—for 1,200 years; and there are millions of people to-day on the verge of hunger in the richest land that e'er the sun shone on. Let us have something that will help the people out of that. The two greatest lifts humanity has had for 1,900 years came from a revolt against denominationalism—the Protestant Reformation and the French Revolution; and what we want is a teaching that will educate the conscience of the nation, so that it cannot tolerate a system of things where one man hungers so that another should feast; where one man is broken in health, strength, will, spirit, and heart on the wheels of toil so that another shall spend his days in sloth and his nights in dissipation. What we want is a teaching that will be for the people in the days that are to come a pillar of fire in the gloom of the night to lead them to that land of promise where there shall be no oppression, no injustice, no wrong, no war, and where brotherhood shall reign.

## Vote of Thanks to Mr. Lloyd-George and Confidence in the Government.

The RIGHT HON. A. H. D. ACLAND (President of the National Liberal Federation) moved the following resolution:—

"That this meeting expresses its deep regret at the absence of the Prime Minister and at the cause of that absence, while according its warmest thanks to Mr. Lloyd-George for his presence and speech to-night; it congratulates Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman upon his accession to the high office of Prime Minister and assures him and his colleagues of the loyal and heartfelt confidence of the Liberal party; endorses the resolutions adopted by the Council of the National Liberal Federation at its meetings in Liverpool, and pledges itself to use every effort to maintain and increase the strength of Liberalism in the constituencies."

Mr. Acland said that in Liverpool he was a wholly new and inexperienced hand. As President of the National Liberal Federation, he followed in this honoured position two distinguished men, and more immediately he followed their fellow-citizen, of whom they were justly proud, Mr. Augustine Birrell, who was a man of cheery temperament, of great wit, and of wonderful humour of speech. With regard to Mr. Lloyd-George, he was sure they would appreciate with what pleasure the Federation welcomed him amongst them for the first time as a Minister of the Cabinet, and they trusted he and his colleagues would carry out the work entrusted to them by the people of this country in a way which would be of lasting value to the State.

The RIGHT HON. R. R. CHERRY, M.P., seconded. He conveyed a message of regret for non-attendance from Major Seely, M.P., who was occupied as a member of the Select Committee on War Office Expenditure. As to Mr. Lloyd-George, he was never afraid to state what he believed to be right. That was the reason why he exercised the influence that he did in affairs of State. He was pleased to hear what Mr. Lloyd-George had said about the rights of small minorities in regard to education. It was to the credit of the Liberal party that, having won a great victory at the polls and being in a position to force what they liked upon the country, they were determined, as far as possible, to do justice to all classes of citizens, however small.

The CHAIRMAN, having alluded to the absence of Mr. Richard D. Holt, who had undertaken to support the resolution of thanks to Mr. Lloyd-George, said that a great blow had fallen upon the Holt family by the sudden death of Mrs. Robert D. Holt. Anyone in Liverpool who knew what Mr. R. D. Holt and the Holt family were would unhesitatingly tender their most sincere sympathy to them in their trouble.

DR. A. P. THOMAS, in supporting the resolution, referred hopefully to the prospects of Liberalism in Bootle, in which division he was defeated at the General Election. The Liberals had been de-



feated by alien immigrants of a most undesirable character—the Liverpool freeholders, who neither owned property nor resided in the division. By the Plural Voting Bill the Government was going to put a stop to the further importation of undesirables of this sort. Mr. Lloyd-George, in his brief period of office, had done more to meet the wishes of the shipping community of Liverpool than the last Government had done during its whole ten years of office.

The vote of thanks was carried with great enthusiasm.

### Vote of Thanks to Chairman.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE apologised to the ladies for not redeeming the promise he had given to make some reference to the question of women's suffrage. The time had slipped by in the discussion on the education question, and he had quite overlooked the subject in which they were interested. But all he had intended to say was that he was a consistent supporter of their claims. In his opinion, the vast majority of the members of the present House would be similarly favourable so long as their sympathies were not alienated by the methods which ladies were now pursuing, and which were anything but wise and tactful. He proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman. He mentioned the fact that Mr. Evans was organising secretary to Lord Brassey when he was the Liberal candidate for Birkenhead in 1861, which was just two years before he (Mr. Lloyd-George) joined the Liberal party. No man had been a harder worker for Liberalism than Mr. Evans had been, both in Liverpool and outside.

MR. GEORGE WHITELEY, M.P., the Chief Liberal Whip, in seconding, congratulated Liverpool on the progress which it had made in its political opinions. Liverpool used to be a synonym for all that was retrogressive, stagnant, and stupid; but now it was amongst the advanced and progressive centres, and sent four excellent members to Parliament.

The resolution was carried by acclamation, Mr. Evans briefly replied, and the proceedings terminated.

## Breakfast to Liberal Secretaries and Agents.

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On Friday morning, May 25th, the Liberal Secretaries and Agents, to the number of over 200, were entertained at breakfast at the Reform Club on the joint invitation of Mr. George Whiteley, M.P. (Chief Liberal Whip), and the President of the National Liberal Federation.

MR. WHITELEY, in the course of a brief address, referred to the great victory which the party had gained at the General Election, principally, in his opinion, on the twin policies of Free Trade and Education. The country had shown that it would have nothing to do with the taxed loaf, and that preferential, differential, or graduated religion in our schools was repugnant to it. He looked forward to a great harvest of progressive and Liberal legislation, and hoped that the members of the House of Commons would remember that the orations even of a Demosthenes, a Cicero, a Gladstone, or a Lloyd-George took up valuable time, and would, therefore, exercise moderation.

MR. ACLAND remarked that it was a fundamental mistake to suppose that they could rest on their oars since the General Election. They had to keep Liberalism alive, and if they were to make it a really great force for good in the country they must look facts in the face. They must not pretend that they did not know that, like their opponents before them, they had a majority in Parliament out of proportion with the votes received at the last election. Don't let them forget that if they let their machinery get rusty it would take a long time to get into working order again. He was sure that all members of Parliament and all who had the chance would do everything in their power to supply all that was necessary to assist the agents to continue their work, just as though the election was pending at any time. Don't let them forget that the forces against them were the same as they ever were. In this country, where Conservatism was so deep and had such a tremendous hold—and would have, as far as they could foresee, for many a day to come—there would always be tremendous forces against them, alike in the town and in the village, and it was no use pretending that they had conquered those forces for good—because they had not. They were alive, and would be more alive than ever. Let them therefore do all in their power to keep their armour bright, for, after all, it was a fighting matter and man was a fighting animal. Let them bear in mind their opposing forces, and let them keep their eyes fixed on them from now to the next election. Mr. Acland proceeded to eulogise the work of Mr. Hudson, of Mr. Geake (the Secretary of the Liberal Publication Department) and of Mr. Frank Barter. Finally, he said they all rejoiced in the splendid work done by the agents, and he hoped they would once more carry the banner of Liberalism to victory when the time came.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE, who was enthusiastically received, said: After the rebuke administered by the Chief Whip to Parliamentarians who make long speeches, I shall take the hint and confine myself within the compass of a very few minutes. I always believe in the motto of the late Mr. Biggar, who was the greatest artist in the great art of Parliamentary consumption of time that was ever known. His great motto was—"Never speak except in Government time"; and this not being Government time I do not think I will occupy much of it. I am very delighted to meet here on the morrow of the victory the men to whose skill and energy and devotion that victory—certainly the magnitude of it—was to a very large extent due. We meet here the officers of the army after the victory to breakfast together. I recollect a very distinguished member of Parliament telling me that he breakfasted with Bismarck after Gravelotte, and he said there was a great difficulty in finding material for breakfast. However, Bismarck managed to get six eggs, three of which he took himself, and the remaining three he divided amongst the army. Our Bismarcks have treated us more liberally this morning. I agree with what has fallen from Mr. Acland, my political godfather, that after all we are only beginning our task, and that we should not rest on our oars. As a matter of fact, we have only just succeeded in getting the boat into the water, and the time has begun for plying the oars. We won the last election very largely owing to the angry resentment of the country—the angry resentment which the country felt at the worst display of incompetence that any Government has ever been guilty of. Our task was almost an easy one. We had simply to roll out the list of the names of those who composed the Ministry, and the thing was done. But now we have got a very big job in front of us, and we need all the encouragement and strength that comes not merely from the loyal support of those who are in the country, but from the organised support of the country, and that will depend upon you. We are challenging great interests and powerful ones. It is true that next year our task may be a little easier. When we are attacking the drink interest, I shall expect at any rate that all the zealous friends of religious education will support us. But still there is a good deal to be done, and it is only to be done by steady, consistent work. Our majority is a very huge one, and that in itself is a peril, because there is no battle in which you must not expect casualties, and these casualties will probably occur here and there in the course of the next few years. But nothing must discourage us. We must go on. The country is really Liberal at heart. It believes in progress, and wherever they get it I am perfectly certain they will support the Ministry that is accomplishing their wishes in that respect. That seems to me to be the lesson in every part of the Empire. It does not matter where you go—Canada, New Zealand, any part of the Empire—as long as a Government is really engaged upon the work of progress they get the support of the vast majority of the people dwelling in that part

of this great commonwealth. I am sure that is what will happen here. It is rather extraordinary when you come to think of it. The Unionist party have practically been in power for twenty years, and as long as they were doing progressive work they got the support of England. Between 1886 and 1892 they did some fairly good work. They disestablished quarter sessions, and established free education; they gave local government in this country; later on they gave local government in Ireland; and as long as they were doing really progressive work the country was behind them, and it was only when they began to fall back upon the old reactionary ideas that the country repudiated them. That shows that England is really Liberal; and if this Government not only fully realises that, but fully acts upon it, there is not the slightest danger that England will desert them. Of course, the Celt is always all right. You need not fear him. He is a man with great ideals and great hopes. He must be, or else he would have broken his heart long ago. You can do a great deal not only by supporting us when we are doing good work, but by seeing that we are doing good work, by insisting upon it, and by occasionally reminding us what we are there for. Even Liberal Governments have to be reminded sometimes that they are there to do the work of Liberalism, but not this Government, I hope. But if you see any lapses of that kind remind us, and I am sure you will be doing good work for Liberalism and for the Government itself. We will have to fight another General Election—I don't know how soon—you cannot tell. That depends upon the House of Lords, but you may depend upon it that a Liberal Government will not allow the will of the people to be thwarted for ever by the House of Lords. It is just possible that the time may come, and that it is not far distant, when a Liberal Government will find it incumbent upon itself really to place that great issue before the country. But, whether or not, one thing is important, that when my friend Mr. Geake, head of the Liberal Publication Department, comes to prepare the Liberal-leaflets for, let us say, 1911, he will have such a record of work done to place before the electors that they will say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servants. Enter upon another six years." Well, that is the most important thing. I am very delighted to meet here the gentlemen who have got to do the bulk of the work in the country during the next five or six years. I quite agree with Mr. Acland as to the magnificent work done by the National Liberal Federation, by Mr. Hudson, Mr. Edward Evans, Mr. Geake, and Mr. Barter. I again thank you for this opportunity of meeting you here together, and I trust that this will not be the last great victory which Liberalism will secure in your lifetime and in mine.

Mr. R. A. HUDSON (Secretary of the National Liberal Federation) proposed a vote of thanks to the hosts—Mr. Acland and Mr. Whiteley. He also thanked Mr. E. Evans and Mr. Bertram Furniss—their Liverpool hosts. The agents, he said, were highly satisfied with the meetings which had been held in Liverpool, and

they all hoped it would not be many years before they were again assembled in that hospitable city.

MR. LINFORTH, of Leeds (Secretary of the Leeds Liberal Federation), seconded.

The vote of thanks was passed amid applause. MR. ACLAND and MR. EVANS responded, the latter acknowledging the valuable services of his secretary, Mr. Furniss.

MR. BERTRAM FURNISS, in response to calls, delivered a brief speech in which he compared the position of the Liberal party when he first came to Liverpool as agent in 1899 with the position to-day. Seven years ago, he said, there was only one Liverpool Liberal member of Parliament, now there were four. At that time they had only six Liberal aldermen in the City Council, and they still had only six—but that was a matter over which the party had no control. They had, however, increased the number of councillors from fourteen to forty-three. They had, in fact, a clear majority amongst the elected councillors of the city. During the seven years the Liverpool Liberal Federal Council had trebled the number of its subscribers, and during the past year they had received £1,500 more than in 1899. Mr. Furniss returned thanks to his staff for the assistance they had rendered him in making arrangements for the reception of the delegates.

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## OTHER MEETINGS.

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In addition to the meetings reported in the preceding pages a series of business meetings, under the auspices of the Society of Certificated and Associated Liberal Agents and the Gladstone Benevolent Fund for Liberal Agents, were held on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 22nd and May 23rd, the most important of these being the thirteenth annual meeting of the former society, at which meeting Mr. Robert A. Hudson was elected Chairman for the ensuing year.

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The agents attending these meetings were entertained at luncheon and tea by Mr. Edward Evans at the Junior Reform Club on Tuesday, May 22nd, and the Examining Board of the Agents' Society were the guests of Mr. Hudson at dinner at the Reform Club the same evening.

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On the evening of Wednesday, May 23rd, a reception was given at the Philharmonic Hall by the President of the Liverpool Liberal Federal Council and the Presidents of the nine Liverpool divisional Liberal Associations to the members of Parliament, delegates, and other representative Liberals attending the meetings. Mr. Evans extended a cordial welcome to the visitors to Liverpool, and short speeches were also delivered by Lord Brassey, the Right Hon. A. H. D. Acland, Mr. Ellis J. Griffith, M.P., and others.

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Previous to the reception Mr. Edward Evans and the Chairman of the Liverpool Reform Club (Mr. A. G. Jeans) entertained at dinner at the Reform Club the officers and Executive Committee of the National Liberal Federation, the officers of the local Liberal Associations, and a large number of members of Parliament and other representative Liberals, and on Thursday, May 24th, the Chairman (Mr. Walter J. Bellis) and Committee of the Liverpool Junior Reform Club entertained a similar representative gathering at luncheon at the Junior Reform Club.

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On the afternoon of Thursday, May 24th, a public meeting was held in the Hope Hall under the auspices of the Women's Liberal Federation. Mrs. E. Stewart Brown presided, and speeches were delivered by the Right Hon. R. R. Cherry, K.C., M.P., Mrs.

Louise B. Swann, Mr. J. F. L. Brunner, M.P., Mrs. Allan Bright, Mrs. Sheldon Amos, and others.

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On the same afternoon the delegates enjoyed a series of very attractive excursions, arranged for by the local Reception Committee. Amongst the most largely attended were river excursions and visits to the magnificent steamships *Arabic* and *Lucania* by the courtesy of the White Star and Cunard lines, and a visit to Port Sunlight on the invitation of Messrs. Lever Bros. Ltd., the visitors in each case being entertained at tea.

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The Electric Overhead Railway and Generating Station were also visited by a large number of delegates, the directors of the company courteously permitting inspection of the powerful electrical machinery and plant.

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A special service, arranged by the Rev. E. N. Hoare, was held on the morning of Thursday, May 24th, at the Cathedral. The Rector of Liverpool (Canon Kempthorne) being the preacher.

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*Considerations of space prevent these various gatherings being more than merely chronicled.*

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